

Israel moves bill to curb PLO activity

TEL AVIV (APF) — The Israeli parliament approved on Monday its first of three readings a bill to curtail Palestinian activity outside the autonomous zones and particularly in Jerusalem. The bill includes a clause banning institutions of the Palestinian Authority from operating on territory under Israeli sovereignty. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said. The vote came two days after Palestinians welcomed Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller to the de facto Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) headquarters in East Jerusalem, provoking Israeli anger. Israeli security guards were refused entry to the building. "For the moment we can do nothing, but when the bill will have been passed, after the second and third readings then we will be able to act effectively," Mr. Rabin announced. The government inserted two clauses into general legislation on the implementation of the May 4 autonomy agreement with the Palestinians, who want a share of Jerusalem as capital of their own state. As a result, most members of the opposition right-wing Likud Party which is opposed to the autonomy accord voted against the bill in a split decision with 48 or 40 against, two abstentions.

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ing receives congratulations

MMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday received cables from Prime Minister Narendra Rao and Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian offering congratulations on the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. Mr. Ter-Petrosian, the King more success and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity, he said the treaty will contribute to ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and will lay the foundation stone for a era of peaceful co-existence in the Middle East.

oliday declared

MMAN (Petra) — All industries, government departments and public institutions will be closed Monday, Nov. 14, in observance of his Majesty King Hussein's birthday, a communique issued by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali said.

apan donates \$5m for agriculture

MMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan has decided to extend a grant up to 500 million Japanese Yen (about \$5 million) to Jordan, a Japanese embassy press release said Monday. The notes this effect were exchanged between Minister of Planning Jishiro Khatib and Japanese ambassador Yoji Ikeda at a Planning Ministry, the press said. The grant is the second of this kind from Japan, and will be used to purchase agricultural machinery, vehicles and other items in order to support the efforts of the Jordanian side to become more self-reliant in the supply of basic foods, such as wheat, rice, etc. it added.

gypt opening office in Gaza, Yricho

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has decided to open a representation office in Gaza and Yricho — the first Arab city to take this step, the Egyptian representative in Cairo said on Monday. Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority said the Egyptian decision highlights it is considered a positive step and strong support for the Palestinian cause. Adnan Qudra said in a statement, Egyptian official said the representation office will act as a diplomatic mission.

oman's union its new building

MMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Salameh Hamad Monday opened a new building of the Jordanian Women's Union. In an address at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Hamad declared women in Jordan as main block in the structure of family and said Jordanian women have occupied a leadership position. Under President Asma Khader asked the minister for finding the ceremony and supporting women's issues. Mr. Khader said the union aims to enhance Jordanian women to carry out their role in the society in the fields of equality, justice and peace for human rights. She said membership of the union was open to all Jordanian women or wives of Jordanians.

le boat attacked

IRO (AP) — Unknown men shot at a Nile cruiser carrying 30 foreign tourists in Egypt but no one was injured, a security official said Monday. The shoot-out took place Sunday night in Ques, 480 kilometers south of Cairo, said the security official. The nationalities of the tourists on the boat were not immediately disclosed. Militants fighting against Egyptian rule in the Islamic state have taken south as a battlefield for violent confrontation with the government. More than 450 people, including 40 foreign tourists, have died in the conflict.

Legless paratrooper reenlists.

jumps again

Syria may resume peace talks after Christopher trip

CAIRO (Agencies) — Syria said Monday it might resume its stalled direct negotiations with Israel in Washington following a Middle East tour later this month by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

"We hope that we will come out of this (tour) with something to resume the talks to Washington," Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa told journalists after talks here with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

But he denied an Israeli newspaper report saying Syrian President Hafez Al Assad had agreed to an Israeli pullout from the Golan Heights over 16 months.

"This information is inaccurate," Mr. Sharaa told journalists before leaving Cairo for Damascus.

Until now Syria has demanded a total Israeli pullout over a few months from the Golan Heights. Israel proposed a phased withdrawal over nearly five years without specifying the depth of the pullout from the strategic plateau.

Earlier, Mr. Sharaa said Clinton's visit to Damascus and talks with Mr. Assad "brought positive results."

"It is hard to measure progress with a ruler. We

hope some tangible progress will be made in the near future."

Progress was linked to "Israel's seriousness and its responses to the peace requests put forth by Syria," Mr. Sharaa said.

During his visit to Damascus on Oct. 27, Mr. Clinton spoke of "progress" in the Israeli-Syrian track of the peace process but refused to elaborate.

Mr. Sharaa said Mr. Clinton's statements after his visit to the region were "optimistic," but added: "We saw an American understanding of the principle of complete (Israeli) withdrawal for complete peace."

Mr. Clinton "personally wanted to follow the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks," Mr. Sharaa said.

"Syria believes that it has made every effort to render the peace process successful, and the ball is in the Israeli court," Mr. Sharaa said.

He handed Mr. Mubarak a message from Mr. Assad and said the talks focussed on the peace process since Mr. Clinton's regional tour.

(Continued on page 7)

Arabs and Israelis meet informally on arms control

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

AMMAN — Experts from Arab and Israeli countries met informally in Jordan on Monday to discuss a proposal for creating a conflict prevention centre in the Middle East.

A working group of middle-ranking defence officials and politicians will also prepare for a larger arms control meeting in Tunis in December.

The talks, sponsored by Washington and Moscow, are part of multilateral discussions between Israel and Arab countries launched after the Madrid peace conference of 1991. Five groups to discuss economic cooperation, water, the environment, arms control and refugees were set up in 1991.

"Basically, we will put together and finalise a proposal for setting up a conflict prevention centre — to present it to the Tunis meeting," Abdullah Toukan, Jordan's chief arms control negotiator, told Reuters.

"This includes its functions, structure and secretariat."

Toukan said the centre would be expected to host the centre for an interim period pending progress toward broader Arab-Israeli peace. Dr. Toukan said.

Members from inside and

outside the region are expected to fund the proposed centre, which could start by holding seminars on confidence-building measures. Later on, it could act as a link between regional and global disarmament bodies.

The group in Jordan will begin formal talks on Tuesday.

But Syria and Lebanon did not attend. The two countries which neighbour Israel have boycotted all multilateral meetings saying they were irrelevant until Israel withdrew from all occupied Arab lands.

Three Arab states which are diplomatically isolated — Iraq, Libya and Sudan — have also been absent.

The talks in Jordan follow last month's signing of a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, Israel's second with an Arab state after Egypt.

The agreement commits both countries to work towards creating a Middle East free of all weapons of mass destruction and to set up a regional body along the lines of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

"Everyone is giving the meeting a serious political and military input as it takes place in Jordan after the peace treaty and everyone respects the Jordanian role in establishing security and stability in the region," Dr. Toukan said.

Delegates at the Dead Sea talks will also discuss efforts to curb arms proliferation in the region," Dr. Toukan said.

But diplomats say there is no prospect yet of arms control in the Middle East.

Most Arab states are reluctant to make commitment on cutting conventional weapons until they have dealt with Israel's nuclear potential, their main concern. Israel is the only regional power believed to have operational nuclear weapons.

Toukan said.

Water talks in Athens

Management and conservation of the Middle East's water, one of the region's most precious resources, will be discussed at the Middle East multilateral negotiations which began in Athens on Monday.

The water resources working group of the peace process began its seventh meeting on projects such as a

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Water talks in Athens



RESCUED: Civil defence team on Monday that hit the Wadi Abdoun area of Amman (see rescue an elderly woman trapped by floods page 3) (Photo by Youssef Allan)

King underlines need for peace on all Arab-Israeli fronts

HM calls for enhanced ties with France

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday stressed the importance of achieving comprehensive peace in the region and the need to conclude peace treaties at all Arab-Israeli negotiating tracks.

At a meeting with French Chief of Staff Admiral Jacques Lanxade at the Royal Court, King Hussein said France could play a key role in the Middle East peace process, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The King underlined the need to enhance military cooperation between Jordan and France, especially in fields of training and exchange of delegations, explaining to Adm. Lanxade the Jordanian army's needs

for French technical assistance.

The King also outlined the Jordanian Armed Forces' needs for French technical aid with a view to upgrading their efficiency and updating their capabilities, Petra said.

The Jordanian air force includes French-made Mirage-1 planes and Alouette helicopters.

Adm. Lanxade extended congratulations to the King over the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and commended the King's courage in peacemaking, Petra said.

He also lauded the role of the Jordanian Armed Forces in maintaining security and stability in the Middle East and in various parts of the

world through participation in international peace keeping operations.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Abdul Hafez Miral.

Adm. Lanxade was also received by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali. The two reviewed at the meeting, held at the prime ministry, the latest developments in the peace process and the influences of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty in regional stability and security.

Dr. Majali, who is also minister of defence, and Adm. Lanxade discussed bilateral relations in military fields.

(Continued on page 7)

Senate panel studies treaty

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) on Monday referred to its Foreign Affairs Committee the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, which was endorsed by the Lower House Sunday.

The 80-member Lower House ratified the treaty Sunday by 55 votes to 23 with one abstention. One legislator was absent.

The 14-member Foreign Affairs Committee, headed by former Prime Minister Zaid Rifai, started reviewing the treaty immediately after it was referred to it.

The 40-member Senate will likely vote Wednesday after a one-day debate. It is expected to unanimously endorse the treaty, which was signed Oct. 26 to end 46 years of conflict between Jordan and Israel.

The Israeli Knesset, or parliament, endorsed the treaty Oct. 25 by a vote of 105 to three, with six abstentions and six legislators absent.

Meeting under the chairmanship of Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi, the Senate also discussed and approved a draft law on specifications and measures for 1993.

The draft law had earlier been returned to the Lower House due to differences with the Senate over certain articles that concern trade marks. The Senate endorsed the draft law in the form it was approved by the Lower House without any changes to it.

The Senate referred back to the Lower House a draft law on institution for the exports guarantees. The decision was taken in the light of a report by the Senate's Finance Committee.

The Senate Foreign Affairs Committee started its review of the peace treaty immediately after the document was referred to it.

Mr. Rifai, the committee's head, told Petra that the panel continued its deliberations late into the night.

Mr. Rifai expected the committee to complete its deliberations and present its recommendations to the full Senate on Tuesday, clearing the way for floor debate and expected endorsement of the treaty.

Israel and Hamas want dialogue but cannot agree on conditions

By Lamis K. Andoni
The writer has just returned from Gaza and a working visit to the occupied territories

CONFLICTING Israeli statements regarding opening a dialogue with Hamas reflect a serious debate within the Israeli cabinet on means to get the Islamic Resistance Movement into the peace process, according to Israeli officials and Palestinian analysts.

"There has been no final opinion. The issue is still being debated," says Israeli foreign ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor.

"But there is an Israeli willingness to negotiate with Hamas if Hamas is willing to negotiate with and to recognise Israel," he said.

Hamas officials refused to respond and accused Israel of floating "trial balloons."

"We have nothing to say. The Israelis have to make up their mind," said an angry Mahmoud Al Zahar, a Hamas leader.

He said that initially Hamas had suggested an end to attacks against civi-

lians as a prelude to dialogue but that now the movement had no comment until the Israelis took a clear position.

Dr. Zahar's attitude, in view of analysts, partly reflect deep suspicions among Hamas leaders and many Palestinians that Israel is waging a campaign of assassination of Islamist leaders that had begun with the killing of activist and journalist Hani Ayed last week.

But a prominent clergyman close to the movement said that his call for dialogue with the Israelis still stood and that his position was consistent with Hamas policies.

"My call still stands. The need for dialogue is more urgent than ever to stop the bloodshed," said Sheikh Jamil Hammami, who called for dialogue last week in return for release of Palestinian prisoners.

At least four senior officials have publicly called for dialogue with Hamas but

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has dismissed the possibility.

The apparent shift in the Israeli position is seen as an indication of Hamas' relative success in using the escalation of violent attacks as a bargaining chip to make Israel speak directly to the movement about major Palestinian issues such as political prisoners.

Prospects for negotiations between Israel and Hamas have alarmed the Gaza Strip-based Palestinian National Authority (PNA) that is seeking to accommodate the Islamic movement but does not want to be sidestepped.

"Direct contacts between Hamas and Israel will deal a heavy blow to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that wants to remain the sole interlocutor and party that brings along other Palestinian groups," says a Palestinian analyst.

In the view of many, the fact that the Israeli government is even considering talking to Hamas is an indicator of the failure of the PNA to consolidate its posi-

tion as the representative of the Palestinian demands at the negotiating table.

The way to direct contacts between the Israeli government and Hamas, however, is still planted with obstacles, especially that Hamas is still described by Israel as a "terrorist" organisation.

But the indirect exchange of proposals between Hamas and Israel is in itself an important turning point revealing that both are ready to talk but differ on the terms.

While Israel is trying effectively to extract a de facto recognition of the Jewish state by Hamas, the Islamic movement is trying to get Israel to talk to it as a major representative of the Palestinian people without succumbing to Israeli terms.

The very idea of dialogue between Hamas and Israel will necessarily carry the seeds of implicit mutual acceptance, changing the role of the major Palestinian political opposition

(Continued on page 7)



EXPATRIATES: His Majesty King Hussein on Monday meets with a delegation representing the Jordanian community living in the United Arab Emirates (see page 12) (Petra photo)

Rabbani accepts U.N. peace plan

KABUL (R) — The Afghan government led by President Burhanuddin Rabbani has accepted a U.N. peace plan, an envoy that he says is in principle in agreement with the U.N. proposals, Mr. Rabbani's spokesman said.

The government and its allies have approved in principle the U.N. proposals, Mr. Rabbani's spokesman said. The government and its allies have approved in principle the U.N. proposals, Mr. Rabbani's spokesman said.

warring Afghan factions to agree to a plan under which a ceasefire would be implemented in Kabul.

A representative commission would then be formed to choose a transitional authority and convene a grand assembly, which would in turn draw up a new constitution and decide on a future government.

Neither Mr. Rabbani's government nor the combined opposition led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and General Abdul Rashid Dostum has objected to these broad proposals but they have yet to agree on the details.

It was not immediately clear if Mr. Hekmatyar and Gen. Dostum, who challenge the legitimacy of the Rabbani-led government, had given their response to Mestiri.

Mr. Murad said the government's reply had been conveyed by telephone to Mr. Mestiri on Saturday night along with detailed proposals on how the commission should be set up and

how it should work. In the government's view, each of the nine guerrilla parties should supply two representatives each. The commission should also contain 10 independent Afghan personalities and two representatives from each of the country's 30 provinces.

Members of the commission would not be able to take part in the interim government, whose members would not be allowed to serve in the government that would follow. The commission and interim government would complete their tasks in four months.

Mr. Mestiri's previous attempts to persuade Afghan faction leaders to sit down together foundered on the refusal of Mr. Rabbani and his allies to allow Gen. Dostum to take part. Mr. Mestiri has said Gen. Dostum, whose ethnic Uzbek faction is not one of the nine Islamic parties which fought against the Soviet occupation, must be represented.

Islamists keep quiet about aid to keep Cairo government happy

ASSIUT (AFP) — Islamic fundamentalists have adopted a low profile in giving aid to victims of the Dronka fire disaster to avoid upsetting the government, as they did two years ago when an earthquake shook the country.

"We don't want to embarrass the government and give it the impression that we are the most active," said Mohammed Habib, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in the southern province of Assiut.

"That is why we have informed the authorities of our activities and they did not object," Mr. Habib said. The fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood is officially banned but still tolerated by the government.

In contrast to the slow pace of government aid, young Muslim fundamentalists began immediately to take food and blankets to survivors who lost everything in the huge fire in the southern Egyptian village of Dronka on Wednesday.

More than 500 residents were killed when flood waters carried flaming oil from a nearby oil depot through the village. Many of the survivors took refuge in the neighbouring city of Assiut, about 380 kilometres south of Cairo.

"Our objective is purely humanitarian and has no political dimension. The Muslim Brotherhood is not looking for a confrontation with the state, like that which happened in Cairo during the catastrophe of October 1992," Mr. Habib said.

The 1992 earthquake left 550 people dead and thousands homeless in Cairo's poorer areas. When word spread of the Brotherhood's conspicuous help to victims, the government banned the group from continuing its activities.

The Brotherhood's current low profile was evident in comments Sunday by its leader General Mohammed Hamed Abu Al Nasr, who avoided criticising the government following the fire and flood disasters.

He simply appealed to the population to "ask for the grace of God so we can avoid such catastrophes."

The Islamic Association for Dawa and the Assiut Development Society, both controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood, asked the province's social affairs department for permission to set up a camp of 12 tents.

"These tents, like 2,000 blankets and money for the purchase of food were sent Saturday to Assiut by the Medical Union in Cairo," dominated by the Brotherhood, said Mr. Habib.

The Dronka disaster was the "indirect result" of the government's policy aimed at eradicating Islamic influence in Assiut, he said.

"Its budget is directed towards the purchase of arms, so that this province, the

poorest in Egypt, is deprived of all development plans." Mr. Habib charged that the fuel depot near Dronka was not maintained and that most of the fire engines which arrived on the scene did not work.

The Brotherhood, which is opposed to violence, is the only Islamist organisation present in Assiut. Its publicity posters have replaced those of the militant Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group).

Assiut was a Gamaa stronghold for two years until a police crackdown in August. Militants fled to neighbouring provinces, particularly Minya where attacks on police officers continue.

Mr. Habib denied his group had benefited from the Gamaa's disappearance. "The policy of confronting this organisation has pushed the state to adopt a very repressive policy towards the representatives of the Islamic movement," he said, recalling recent arrests of dozens of members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Assiut.

However, the authorities allow the Brotherhood to gather every Tuesday in the main town mosque. "Thousands of young people attend these meetings which deal first and foremost with religious issues. But we cannot avoid tackling the country's situation," Mr. Habib said.

Sudan reactivates Islamic law

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's Muslim fundamentalist government is reactivating Islamic rules which ban men and women dancing together and obliging females to wear unrevealing clothes, a government newspaper reported Monday.

The daily Al Engaz Al Watani newspaper said the government has also launched a campaign under the slogan of "A Year Without Alcohol" and has raised illegal distilleries.

Shortly after it came to power in a military coup in 1989, Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir's government installed rules to conform Sudan to strict Islamic laws. But many of the rules were later disregarded.

The newspaper said the two-week-old campaign against illegal alcohol distilleries had put an end to 80 per cent of the problem. It said most of the confiscations were made among the southern Sudanese refugees who fled the civil war to Khartoum and live in camps for displaced people.

The 11-year-old war is between the Muslim majority government in the north and the Christian and animist minority in the south.

In another development, the government accused the southern rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army of violating a six-month ceasefire in the south. A statement issued by the armed forces general command Sunday night accused the rebels of not being interested in reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

There has been an intermittent ceasefire in the south for several years to allow relief aid to reach starving southerners and to encourage peace talks. Both sides regularly exchange accusations of violating the truce.

Last week, the southern rebels accused the government of carrying out attacks in violation of the ceasefire. They said both sides suffered casualties but gave no details of the fighting.

Malaria spreading Over a quarter of a million cases of malaria were registered in Sudan in the first nine months of this year, up from 41,000 in the same period last year, health officials said Monday.

Dr. Basbir Al Tayeb Salam, head of the government epidemic department, said Monday that 285,461 cases of malaria were reported to the end of September, a near seven-fold increase on the 41,340 cases reported in the same period last year.

The official added the reported cases were estimated to represent only a quarter of the total number of people infected.

Human rights council President Bashir has ordered the creation of a council for human rights to advise the state and prepare research on human rights, a justice ministry official said.

It will be chaired by Abdul Aziz Shiddo, the minister of justice and attorney general, and comprise 13 members. Among them will be representatives of the judiciary, the attorney general's department, the parliament, the security services, the ministries of foreign affairs, the interior and labour as well as organisations working in the human rights field.

Israeli mechanic takes M-60 tank on joy ride

BEN ZAKAI (AP) — An Israeli soldier commandeered a tank from an army base Sunday and drove it recklessly down a highway for an hour, shooting intermittently, before crashing into a bus and injuring 11 people, officials said.

The soldier, Sergeant Amit Nehemia, 20, a tank mechanic, apparently went berserk over being denied a weekend leave to visit a girlfriend, security sources said.

He surrendered only after three hours of negotiating with police from inside the broken down vehicle banked outside Ben Zakai, a farm about 20 kilometres south of Tel Aviv.

The incident was highly unusual, even for volatile Israel. Police and army went on a "terrorist" alert, complete with combat helicopters laun-

ched to help the search — since the base is not far from the autonomous Gaza Strip. Later they figured out it was a criminal incident.

Most Israelis serve in the army, but seldom do they turn their guns on fellow Israelis or drive tanks out of bases.

The last time a tank was stolen from the same artillery base, Julis, near the southern city of Ashkelon, was in 1958, Israel Radio said.

The army appointed an investigation into how the tank, an Israeli-modified U.S.-made M-60, was stolen. It said that Sgt. Nehemia broke down a fence with the tank and headed towards a highway linking Tel Aviv with the southern cities of Ashkelon and Ashdod at about 9 p.m. (1900 GMT). He travelled 20-30

kilometres, driving recklessly, zigzagging along the way, before hitting electric poles. Then his turret crashed into a passenger bus, and the tank also hit a car before a tread broke forcing it to a halt.

Bus passengers were terrified. "We heard a big bang, the lights went out and then I saw a tank cannon hit the bus. People were screaming, crying. We thought it was a terrorist attack... I think God I came out alive," Gila Nahmias, 27, said.

The army reported complaints of shooting from the tank, but said the cannon was not loaded, suggesting the soldier may have fired a rifle.

Radio reports said the soldier fired at border policemen who tried to stop him. During the chase, soldiers armed with antitank weapons blocked off entire settlements

and farms to try and block the runaway tank from entering. Chain marks were etched on the highway outside Ben Zakai.

There were no reports of bullet injuries. The 11 injured, from the bus and a car, were mostly struck by glass or suffered light impact wounds.

The soldier remained inside the tank for three hours after the crash. Base commanders and a psychologist helped police negotiate a surrender. At 1:15 a.m. (2315 GMT) he gave himself up to a fellow soldier and was driven away in a commander's car.

"We are still checking what his motives were," police chief Asaf Hefetz said. Sgt. Nehemia faces a maximum 15 year sentence, or he could be confined to a mental ward.

Somali warlords plan own governments

MOGADISHU (R) — Somalia's warlords said on Sunday they were about to set up rival governments in what looked clearly like a recipe for renewed civil war.

The two main Somali factions have been flexing muscles as a March 1995 deadline for the pullout of U.N. peacekeeping troops from their war-shattered and anarchic country approaches.

A spokesman at a "reconciliation conference" called by warlord Mohammed Farah Aideded said elders had discussed a broad-based government, probably to be headed by General Aideded. His main opponent, Ali Mahdi Mohammed, said he planned to announce a separate coalition government.

"A broad-based government is being discussed at committee level at Aideded's meeting," a spokesman told Reuters. "It has nothing to do with the coalition Ali Mahdi has promised."

Both plan to announce their governments within weeks. The U.N. has repeatedly urged the warring Somali

groups to agree on a single government to rebuild the shattered country. The warlords' intentions have alarmed ordinary Somalis, who now fear a new war similar to that which followed the ouster in January 1991 of Mohammed Siad Barre.

Somalia has since been without a recognised government. After chasing out Mr. Siad Barre, loyalists of Gen. Aideded and Mr. Ali Mahdi turned against each other in bloodletting that killed at least 30,000 people, caused a famine that claimed 10 times that number, and devastated Somalia's towns and infrastructure.

As international aid workers flooded into Somalia to try to cope with widespread starvation, clan militias took control of key areas such as Mogadishu's port and airport, extorting large amounts of cash from the foreigners.

The announcement that the United Nations had decided to end its mission in Somalia by end-March 1995 appeared to shock many ordinary Somalis. They said

they feared opposing militias would scramble to seize control of key installations such as the airport and port. "Some Somalis fear a resumption of the violence which abated after the arrival of multinational forces in December 1992," one Mogadishu resident told Reuters.

But Professor Mohammed Hassan Awale, a close Aideded aide, said a U.N. pullout — even before March next year — would be welcome.

"They (U.N. troops) are no longer involved in the peacekeeping duties they were sent to carry out. They have long stopped escorting relief convoys and their presence is nonsense," Dr. Awale said.

Dr. Awale said he hoped some of the millions of dollars now being spent on U.N. workers in Somalia would be passed to a new government, to help with national rehabilitation.

At the U.N. in New York on Friday, the Security Council called for a secure and orderly withdrawal by March 31.

Israelis stunned by AIDS carrier's 'campaign of vengeance'

By Dan Perry
The Associated Press
TEL AVIV — Yeshayahu Demner was a respected engineering professor described by students as a reserved, kindly man.

Now police suspect the 46-year-old bachelor led a double life, dedicating the last year of his life to spreading the AIDS virus until he was murdered last week.

Demner's case has stunned Israel. Gay activists fear their struggle for acceptance in a conservative society has been set back years. Some lawmakers are pressing for a crackdown against people with AIDS.

The story broke when police, alerted by colleagues that Demner was missing for

two days, burst into his Haifa apartment Monday to discover his naked body on the couch with marks on his head from being struck.

Police said meticulous personal records found in the apartment revealed a dual identity.

David Tuval, the detective in charge of the case, said the documents showed Demner discovered he had HIV, the sexually transmittable virus that leads to AIDS, in the fall of 1993. After that, he had sex "with many dozens of men" on condition that no protection be used, Mr. Tuval said.

Police sources said the murderer might be a sex partner who discovered Demner was HIV-positive. They refuse to say if they have any suspects.

Colleagues and students said they were shocked by the allegations about the man they knew as the head of the electronics lab at the Technion Engineering Institute.

"The surprise is total," said electrical engineer Yisrael Ariel, a Technion graduate. "He was such a very nice person. He did his job well. It's totally out of character for him to transmit the disease on purpose."

Mr. Tuval said police do not know Demner's motives. But tabloids have constructed a grisly portrait of a man determined to take as many people with him as he could.

A special report in the mass-circulation Maariv newspaper featured a full-page picture of a smiling,

sideburned Demner and a caption that referred to "his amazing campaign of vengeance."

Other reports described him as a "male prostitute" who sometimes was paid for sex and on other occasions offered partners money to forego condoms.

Regardless of what Demner may have done or why, the case is bound to buttress strong anti-gay feelings in Israel, said Anula Shamir, spokeswoman for the Society for Personal Rights, which promotes gay issues.

While Israel was founded on liberal Western values, about half its present population originates in Middle Eastern societies where homosexuality is not accepted.

Orthodox Judaism, which prizes procreation and holds sway in issues like marriage and divorce in Israel, is another anti-gay influence.

Ms. Shamir said. "The Demner case has done gays and lesbians great harm, strengthening a stereotype of the homosexual as dangerous to society, a corruptor of young people," she said.

"Gays and lesbians are far more afraid than in other Western societies to come out of the closet and claim even those rights that they have on paper."

Only days after the Demner case broke, Yoram Las, a lawmaker from the governing Labour Party, presented an "AIDS prevention law" to parliament.

The bill would outlaw sexual contact by HIV carriers who hide their infection from partners. It would also authorise doctors to order AIDS tests and forced hospitalisation of HIV carriers and permit the expulsion from Israel of infected non-citizens.

"It's a matter of life and death," said Mr. Las, who maintained his proposals were not motivated by the Demner case. "An individual's rights aren't worth so many lives."

Mr. Las, a former health ministry director-general, added that Israel's situation was "relatively good," with only 150 Israelis having died of AIDS and 1,500 known HIV carriers.

So far, despite a police call for Demner's sexual partners

to be tested for AIDS, hospital officials in Haifa say the number of those requesting such tests have not increased.

Rafi Niv, a journalist for the Magen (contacts) gay-rights monthly, said many fear that testing will mark them as potential suspects in Demner's murder.

Another homosexual was found murdered in Pardes Katz in the Tel Aviv area on Sunday, and police were probing a possible link with the Demner case, the Itim news agency said.

Police identified the second victim was a 30-year-old waiter born in Demner's hometown, Haifa, who had no criminal record. They said he suffered deep cuts apparently from stabbings. Itim reported.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 7731119

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00	Albion Au Pays De Merveilles
17:30	Embarquement Porte N1
18:00	Le Vent Des Moutons
18:30	News In French
18:45	Varities
19:00	News In Hebrew
19:10	The Nature Of Things
20:00	News In Arabic
20:30	The New Leave It To Beaver
21:10	Shades Of L.A.
22:00	News In English
22:30	House Of Elliot
23:00	Fly By Night

PRAYER TIMES

04:32	Fajr
06:52	(Sunrise) Duha
11:19	Dhuhr
14:26	Asr
16:46	Maghreb
18:45	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swidha, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.
632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624500

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terzian Church Tel. 622300

Church of the Annunciation Tel.
623541

Anglican Church Tel. 618851, Tel.
628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel.
625236

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
624328

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 664195

The Church of Jesus Christ of
Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in
Amman Tel. 811245

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology.

Temperatures will rise slightly
but relative cold will continue.
Skies will be partly cloudy and
winds northwesterly active. In
Aquaba, winds will be northerly
moderate and sea choppy.

Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	5/14
Aqaba	12/25
Deserts	11/22
Jordan Valley	5/16

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 11, Aqaba 24, Humidity
readings: Amman 89 per cent,
Aqaba 52 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Jamal Ibrahim 847351

Dr. Ahmad Wabab Awad 646070

Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790296

Dr. Walid Maari 675485

Firas pharmacy 661912

Fordow pharmacy 778336

Al Asana pharmacy 637055

Nairokhi pharmacy 623672

Al Salama pharmacy 636740

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairokhi pharmacy 623472

Najib pharmacy 647632

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 637777

Civil Defence Emergency 637777

Fire Brigade 617911

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 643402

Traffic Police 666390

Public Security Department 636321

Hotel Complaints 655601

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 661176

Complaints 661176

Amman Municipality 661176

Complaints 661176

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 011230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 661101

Abdull Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 771111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 661101

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636281

Company 633201

Dr. Raed Shabini 995710

Khalifa pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussain Medical Centre 81381332

Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 6442816

Aklich Maternity, J. Ann 6424112

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Muthas, J. Amman 626140

Palestine, Shmeisani 6641714

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

Umm Al-Hayat Hospital 645845

Al-Muhsen Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdull 66612737

Al-Ahli, Abdull 6641046

Italian, Al-Muhsen 771013

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafich 77511126

Army, Marka 89161115

Queen Alia Hospital 666100

Amal Hospital 674155

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53300-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

07:30 Damascus (RJ)

07:30 Ohahrn (RJ)

09:15 Aqaba (RJ)

09:55 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

09:55 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)

10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)

10:30 London (RJ)

10:45 Frankfurt (RJ)

10:50 Cairo (RJ)

17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

04:28 Vienna (OS)

14:05 Munich (YB)

17:05 Rome (AZ)

20:00 Aden (OY)

20:20 Beirut (ME)

22:20 Amsterdam (KL)

22:50 Bucharest (RO)

Rains replenish dams; flood Amman homes

AMMAN (J.T.) — The recent heavy rains have replenished the country's dams, and the King Talal Dam alone received 16 million cubic metres (mcm) of water, raising the present level to 28 mcm, according to Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) Secretary General Hashem Shoubul.

In a statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Shoubul said that before the rains, the 80 mcm capacity dam contained only 12 mcm of water.

He also reported that the Wadi Shoubul Dam now has 550,000 cubic metres, the Kafrein Dam, 500,000 cubic metres and Wadi Al Arab Dam 2.5 million cubic metres.

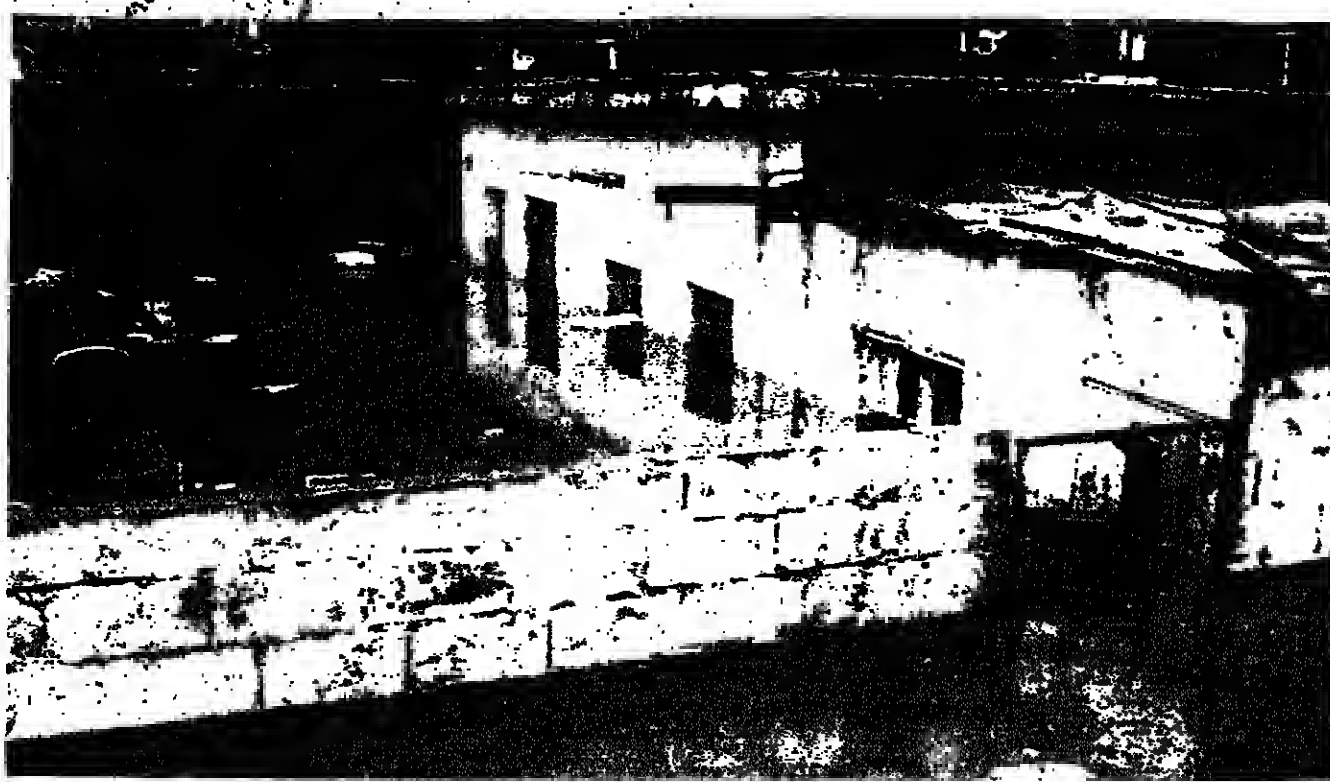
Mr. Shoubul said JVA maintenance teams have been clearing away the large amounts of mud and rocks that were carried by the floods and blocked the King Abdullah Canal as well as the canal which links the Yarmouk River with the King Abdullah Canal.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation Monday announced that it had resumed the distribution of drinking water to different parts of Amman after a brief stoppage because of impurities resulting from mud that was swept by the floods to the main water pumping centres.

The Ministry of Public Works said that all roads in the country are clear and open to traffic except the Jerash-Amman road where landslides had occurred. One damaged culvert along the road caused a large pool of water making travel impossible, the ministry said.

It added that flood water had carried large amounts of earth and stones that blocked the culverts, and workers were working to clear them. The ministry said that it set up operation rooms in different regions to report on any damaged or blocked roads.

The Department of Meteorology Monday said the current storm conditions would



Rain waters Monday flooded a home in the low-lying area of Wadi Abdoun in Amman (Photo by Yousef Al'Allan)

subside Tuesday but skies would be partly cloudy with a chance of more showers.

The department said that the loy pressure which was centred over northern Syria was moving eastwards, causing gradual improvement in the weather.

It said the high winds which were estimated at 90 kilometres per hour Monday would also subside Tuesday, but warned that poor visibility will persist on mountain roads because of fog and in the southern region roads because of sandstorms.

The department said temperatures would reach no more than 12°C Tuesday, dropping to 6°C at night.

Waters flood Amman homes

Jordan Television (JTV) later Monday reported that the floods inundated homes and caused extensive damage

to property in Wadi Abdoun which is inhabited by about 2,000 people.

Amman Mayor, Mamdouh Abbadi, who was at the scene told JTV that he had warned the local residents to move to safer ground in view of the rising stream water.

"I was here yesterday and saw what was coming and advised people to move away because many of them had set their homes close to the stream and near the culvert and the bridge," said Dr. Abbadi.

He said the only solution is for them to leave, adding that they have been squatting on land owned by the municipality.

He admitted that some families have been living at the site for tens of years and have been repeatedly warned of the danger.

"As a temporary measure, the residents can move to some flats owned by the municipality, and the municipality will compensate them for their present homes," said Dr. Abbadi.

He said the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) should be contacted to set up homes for these residents, but they cannot stay in this area because it is and will continue to be a dangerous site.

Damage surveyed in Irbid area

In Irbid Governorate, a ministerial committee chaired by Interior Minister Salamah Hammad Monday inspected flood-stricken areas and met local officials to learn about relief work progress and other related activities by the municipal councils, the Civil Defence Department (CDD) and the Ministry of Public Works.

To Ramtha, the committee met District Governor Aref Abu Karaki who reported on

damage resulting from the floods and operations by local relief groups to pump out water from homes and salvage residents' furniture and other belongings.

Mr. Abu Karaki said several families were evacuated to safe locations and emergency aid was being provided to them.

The committee, which comprises the ministers of Public Works, Social Development, and Municipal and Rural Affairs, later visited Zarqa and Mafraq to survey damaged homes and other property.

In a statement later, Mr. Hammad said he was awaiting a comprehensive report on the situation to be submitted to the Cabinet in order to take appropriate measures.

He said that the committee would submit a proposal for the creation of a special relief fund to deal with similar circumstances and provide assistance to the victims.

Bonn reschedules JD 70m in Kingdom's debts

Debt write-off increased to JD 36m

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Germany and Jordan Monday signed a debt rescheduling agreement covering 154 million Deutschmarks (around JD70 million) of the Kingdom's debts to Bonn and offering 50 million marks (around JD23 million) in debt write-off.

The agreement, signed by Finance Minister Sami Gammob and German Ambassador Heinrich Reiners, came in line with a broad accord that Jordan negotiated with the Paris Club of creditor governments in June involving \$1.21 billion.

Jordan's total foreign debts stood at JD4,803.8 million, or \$6.82 billion, at the end of 1993.

Under the agreement signed Monday, Germany agreed to reschedule 154 million marks for 20 years with a grace period of 10 years. This amount represents all Jordan's debts to Germany covering the period until mid-1997. The Kingdom will only pay 10 million marks (about JD4.2 million) in outstanding interest in three years under the deal.

Also being offered to Jordan is 50 million marks in debt write-off, raising to 79.5 million marks (around JD36 million) the total debt relief that Germany has offered so far to the Kingdom. The write-off is included in the total rescheduled amount.

Michael Bock, deputy chief of mission at the German embassy, said the debt relief was offered on a condition that half of that amount would be used for

local environment protection projects, mostly wastewater management.

Germany holds about \$432 million (about JD305 million) of Jordan's foreign debts. Before Monday's agreement, Jordan had rescheduled about JD61 million dues to Germany. Hence, the total amount of rescheduled Jordanian debts to Germany now stands at JD131 million, leaving a balance of JD174 million.

"Jordan needs immediate debt relief and we are offering it," said Mr. Bock, noting that the accord removes the Kingdom's preoccupation with debt obligations to his country until mid-1997.

"We will have to see what can be done after 1997," said Mr. Bock. "Hopefully, Jordan's economy would flourish and the Kingdom would be able to repay the rest. Otherwise we will have to find a new political formula to address the problem."

"(The formula) is up to the political leaders to decide," added Mr. Bock, reaffirming that Germany was committed to supporting the Kingdom.

The United States is offering a debt relief of \$702 million to Jordan spread over three years. The first \$220 million tranche of the write-off was formalised in September.

Jordan still owes about \$250 million in commercial debts to the U.S., but these debts are not considered eligible for write-off.

Britain has offered \$100 million write-off in direct government loans, leaving about \$500 million in commercial debts arranged through export credit guarantees.

Switzerland has offered about \$25 million in debt relief, and other European countries are offering smaller amounts. Italy, which holds about \$35 million in Jordan debts, will look favourably at a possible write-off, according to diplomatic sources.

Japan and France remain Jordan's largest creditors, each holding more than \$900 million of the Kingdom's debts. While outright debt write-off is not available from Japan, Tokyo has promised to make long-term concessional loans available to the Kingdom.

France, which wrote off about JD5 million of Jordan's debts during a visit His Majesty King Hussein paid to Paris in August, is considering a "debt-equity swap" of about \$100 million, a diplomatic source said, adding that the French government was also negotiating a new protocol under which soft credits will be made available to the Kingdom. No specifics were available.

Jordan's dues to France include JD301 million (about \$428 million) in outstanding payments for leasing contracts related to Royal Jordanian aircraft.

Under the Paris Club agreement reached in June, France and Jordan signed a debt rescheduling accord debt covering about \$200 million in October.

Mr. Gammob said Monday that Jordan was holding discussions with the governments of other Paris Club members to sign bilateral agreements in line with the broad Paris Club accord.

All such bilateral accords have to be signed before Dec. 31.

Arab regional meeting debates perceptions of women's rights

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Varying perceptions of women's rights and the notion of equality between men and women were the themes that dominated much of the discussion on the second day of deliberations on the draft Regional Plan of Action for the Advancement of Arab Women to the Year 2005, at the Arab preparatory meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing in 1995.

A gap between liberal women's organisations and groups and proponents of more traditional values was evident Monday as women clashed frequently in discussions which centred on women's participation in the decision making process, women's role in power structures in their respective societies, the ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDWA) and definitions of equal rights as compared to full rights, and women's rights as compared to human rights.

The draft document being deliberated indirectly curbs women's participation in public life by stressing "full recognition to their (women's) social role" only. Participation of women rather than equality of women is stressed in the draft document. Equal opportunities in areas of health, education and labour, however, are stressed as the objective goals of the conference. Despite reference to equal opportunities in these sectors the need to improve women's participation "to enhance their capability to contribute to economic and social development," leaves out reference to women's role in the political arena and

other decision making areas.

"The document is very vague in various places—I am not sure if it means to imply that women's rights should be expanded in order for development to take place or if it is advocating expansion of women's roles and rights as a principle," said Arwa Al Ameri, head of the Women's Studies Centre at the University of Jordan.

Given the status quo of women in the Arab World, the participants questioned if any Arab society would be able to meet the 1995 United Nations Economic and Social Council goal of allocating 30 per cent of all jobs in "power structure" and decision making institutions to women. Most participants, however, said they would support a quota system allocating "certain" percentage of jobs in power structures to women by law.

One of the most explosive issues debated Monday was the ratification of the CEDWA.

Only seven of 21 Arab countries have ratified the 1979 convention, and even the countries that ratified the convention did so "with reservation." Some delegates at the conference, specifically those from the Gulf countries, with the exception of Kuwait, objected to a paragraph in the draft plan of action which recommended the acceptance with reservations and additions referring to Arab customs and Islamic teachings.

Palestinian women's activist Ruqaiya Alami said that even the countries that ratify CEDWA with reservations are using "the opt out" option which does not require them to apply four major points in the convention.

"The U.N. allowed for a loophole by giving countries the option to ratify

with reservations; the main issues that Arab countries are objecting to are the right of women to free movement without a 'mahram' or protector, equal inheritance laws, equality before the law and the right to pass on your nationality to your child and husband," said Mrs. Alami.

The countries who ratified with reservations are Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Yemen.

Opponents of the convention argue that Islamic Sharia give women "full rights" and that an adoption of "equal rights" is thus not necessary.

Non-governmental agencies, including members of the General Federation of Jordanian Women were lobbying in the corridors of the conference halls to have their document adopted as the plan of action for Arab women for the Beijing conference rather than the plan being discussed at the governmental conference claiming that their plan of action was "more progressive."

But others were critical of both last week's non-governmental organisations (NGO) conference convened to draw up an NGO plan of action and this week's U.N. and governmental meeting.

"We are not discussing the real, fundamental issues that affect women in our society like religion, traditions, customs and family, the condition of female heads of households (25% of the women in Egypt are heads of households) and the girl child," said Dr. Amen.

"We are talking about the rights men are willing to give us, not about the rights which we are entitled to," agreed Emily Nafaa, a veteran Jordanian women's activist.

Abu Hassan awarded S. Africa's highest medal to foreigners

Business groups sign cooperation agreements

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The highest South African medal awarded to foreigners, the "order of good hope" Monday was bestowed on Chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry, Khalidoun Abu Hassan, in recognition of his efforts to promote South African-Jordanian trade relations.

Mr. N.M. Nel, director of the South African Department of Foreign Affairs who forwarded the prize to Mr. Abu Hassan in the name of South African President Nelson Mandela, conveyed a message from Mr. Mandela, saying the South African leader promised "his full support to promote peace in the region."

In 1993, the first official delegation of Jordanian professionals to South Africa had been headed by Mr. Abu Hassan.

Monday's ceremony, which was attended by around 130 representatives from Jordanian private and public sector companies at the Chamber of Industry, was followed by the signing of two cooperation agreements



Khalidoun Abu Hassan

The agreements foresee improved business relations between the two countries, industrial cooperation with a special focus on manufacturing possibilities, promotion of technology transfer, know-how exchange and licensing agreements.

The South African delegates highlighted the importance of small and medium enterprises for business cooperation. "The small and medium enterprises are innovative, creative, and fast," said the president of NAF-COC, K.J. Hlongwane.

"Their existence is crucial to ensure long-term stable economic growth and to cope with unemployment," he called for increased government initiatives to support small and medium enterprise.

Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs, N.M. Nel said that South Africa industrialists had

been looking at Jordan, "because it is playing a very constructive role in the region, and because it is strategically placed in the area."

The deputy director of the South African Chamber of Business, R. Haywood, described South Africa as a "bridge" for Jordan to reach Southern African markets, with a potential 100 million consumers.

P. Verwey, director of External Trade Promotion at SACOB, said foreign investment was of utmost importance for South Africa, since "50 per cent of our economy is based on foreign trade." The food processing, electronic, steel, plastic and chemical industries bore particular investment potential in South Africa, he said.

No statistical data concerning Jordanian-South African trade relations were available, but Mr. Abu Hassan told the Jordan Times that the Kingdom so far has mainly imported steel, industrial tools and machinery, chemicals and agricultural products (corn) from South Africa.

South Africa, which has been buying potash products and fertilizers from Jordan, is, according to Mr. Abu Hassan "not only the biggest economic and political power in the Sub-sahara, but also rich in natural resources. At the same time, Jordan is a strategic partner for South Africa in the Middle East," he added.

Health minister says preparations are set to train more nurses

ZARQA (J.T.) — Minister of Health Aref Batayneh said here Monday that the health ministry plans to recruit and train greater numbers of nurses and midwives and to raise efficiency.

Addressing a ceremony at the government hospital of Zarqa where a unit to improve nursing services has been installed, the minister said that plans are under way to open similar units in various government hospitals with help from the Italian government.

Italy, said the minister, has been providing expertise and financial assistance in establishing the ministry's nursing development units at the country's public hospitals. One such unit is already in operation at Al Bashir hospital in Amman, he added.

According to Dr. Batayneh, a similar nursing development unit was opened in Salt and another is scheduled to be opened at the new Karak hospital which is expected to start operating before the end of the year.

Health ministry officials said that the project aims to improve the quality of nursing care at hospital through regular in-service training.

Zarqa Hospital Director Mamoun Maabreh said the creation of the unit and the expansion of the maternity ward there were undertaken after the nurses' residential complex was converted into



Aref Batayneh

an annex and the residential quarters were moved to another location, thus creating room for additional beds.

The minister toured the new parts of the hospital and later met Governor Mislch Tarawneh and listened to requests for further health services.

Earlier in Amman, Dr. Batayneh addressed the opening session of a regional health consultative meeting which was organised in cooperation with the World Health Organisation (WHO) office in Amman to discuss environmental protection in the Mediterranean area.

Attended by representatives from Jordan and 10 other countries from the Arab World and Pakistan, the four-day meeting is set to discuss working papers dealing with environmental health and to study the effects of development schemes on the environment.



Austrian Airlines holds annual dinner party

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES in cooperation with its general sales agent, Petra Travel & Tourism, held their annual dinner party on Wednesday, Nov. 02, 1994 at the Dead Sea Hotel.

Mr. Sami Abu Alsoud,

sales manager of Austrian Airlines in Jordan, held a speech in which he welcomed all attendees and distributed "Certificates of Merit" to the top travel agents in appreciation for their support of Austrian Airlines.

Budeiri Trading & Contracting Est.

BTC Interior Design Dept.
Eng. Ahmed Budeiri

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It was our pleasure working with your team at all times during our designing and construction stages.

Clinton approves U.S. troop withdrawals from Haiti

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has approved a Defence Department plan to withdraw 6,000 of the nearly 15,000 U.S. ground troops in Haiti by Dec. 1, and the 7,800 ground forces in Kuwait by Dec. 22, the Washington Post reported in its Monday edition.

Administration officials asked to comment on the report told Reuters there would be a "draw-down" of U.S. troops in Haiti and Kuwait in the coming weeks, but gave no details.

The paper quoted senior administration officials as saying the president had approved the Pentagon's plan Sunday while campaigning on the west coast.

His national security advisers debated and approved the plan at a White House meeting Saturday, it said.

The Post said senior officials described the decision to withdraw the troops as being unconnected with the political campaign, now in its final day.

But it said the news could prove popular across the country.

The report said the remaining 9,000 troops left in Haiti after Dec. 1 would be withdrawn in small contingents, possibly beginning after parliamentary elections scheduled for January.

Late last month during a trip to the Middle East, President Clinton hinted that U.S.

troops might be home by the holidays, telling them not to forget to do their Christmas shopping.

The withdrawal from Haiti is in line with earlier pledges by administration officials to reduce the U.S. presence there after the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The post quoted two unnamed senior officials as saying the Pentagon wanted to issue a public announcement on the withdrawals Sunday but was held back by the White House, which feared it would look like too political a move two days before the election.

Meanwhile, Haiti's new Prime Minister Smerck Michel passed a major test Sunday when the Senate gave the go-ahead to his policies and a radically different line-up of ministers to run the Caribbean nation.

In one of the first democratic acts since Mr. Aristide was restored to power with U.S. backing on Oct. 15, Haiti's upper house voted 13-0 to approve Mr. Michel's policies and a slate of cabinet ministers.

Haiti's constitution requires a similar confidence vote in the Chamber of Deputies, set to take place Monday, before Mr. Michel can formally take office and begin governing the impoverished republic.

The 57-year-old former commerce minister and close friend of the president is the

country's fifth prime minister in three years.

His appointment, ratified by parliament Friday, is considered a sign that President Aristide will reach out to the nation's important business community.

Mr. Michel, a rich businessman and landowner, promised to improve relations with the wealthy business elite that have opposed Mr. Aristide.

Mr. Michel's proposed cabinet was drastically different from the previous administration, with 11 new people brought in and three new ministries created.

He created ministries for women's affairs and public functions and a tenth department dedicated to the estimated one million Haitians living abroad, most in the United States.

He vowed to pay more attention to Haitians living abroad and promised to alter the constitution and law which forbids Haitians from holding dual citizenship.

Another surprise was the appointment of Maurice Laforune, a wealthy businessman, as minister of commerce. Just 10 days ago, Mr. Laforune was named head of the Chamber of Commerce, an organ comprised of mostly right-wing businessmen and importers who had been sceptical of the more left-wing Aristide.

"This is a call to the private sector," Mr. Laforune said.

"This means he (Aristide) will have the private sector in his government," Mr. Laforune is obliged to resign the chamber post.

The cabinet contains more technicians and fewer politicians, but insiders said Michel had struggled to find enough candidates to fill all of the positions.

At least one minister said he did not know he would be included until he received a telephone call Sunday morning.

But Mr. Michel's policy declaration provided no major shocks, stressing instead the difficulties lying ahead.

The Senate debated for three hours before the vote. Though some senators questioned the prime minister on issues including punishment for those who killed during the military regime, speakers supported Mr. Michel's programme.

As if to emphasise the enormity of the organisational difficulties he will face, the meeting was delayed — several senators arrived more than an hour late — and Mr. Michel was almost drowned out by the loud hum of a faulty sound system.

He called on Haitians to seize the restoration of democratically-elected Aristide as a chance to work in "an irreversible manner on the road towards economic, social, human and durable development."



U.S. President Bill Clinton reaches out to a young girl during a rally in Seattle. President Clinton continues to campaign across the U.S. for Washington state Democrats at the Pike Place Market in Seattle. President Clinton continues to campaign across the U.S. for Democratic candidates (AFP photo)

Clinton campaigns in west; Republicans confident of gaining Senate control

WASHINGTON (AP) — With control of the U.S. Congress and key states in the balance, President Bill Clinton hunted west coast votes for fellow Democrats Sunday in a final, uphill campaign push.

Opposition Republicans expressed confidence they would capture control of the Senate, and perhaps the House of Representatives as well.

"I'll be happy with a one-vote victory," said Texas Republican gubernatorial challenger and former presidential son George W. Bush, speaking for nervous candidates everywhere.

With voters expressing widespread anger and disillusionment, the polls all pointed to major, midterm Republican congressional gains.

"Obviously we're going to lose some seats in the House and in the Senate," conceded White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta. Even so, he said Sunday, "we have a very good chance" of holding both houses for the final two years of Mr. Clinton's term.

In the House, where Democrats have held a majority for 40 years, Republican whip Newt Gingrich predicted Republican gains of 35 to 60 seats. A switch of 40 would make him speaker. The first Republican to wield the gavel since Dwight Eisenhower was president.

Mr. Gingrich was behind a Republican Contract With America, a campaign manifesto that made Republican candidates everywhere the party of lower taxes and a more conservative government.

Mr. Clinton's counter claim was that the country was better off than it was two years ago, and that Republicans only offered a return to "trickle-down economics" that favoured the wealthy. But after two years in the White House, he was re-

markedly unpopular in some parts of the country — so much so that many Democrats made it clear he should campaign elsewhere.

The midterm election math worked against the Democrats, who could expect to lose seats as the party holding the White House.

So did the 1994 numbers. Of nine Senate seats with no incumbent, six are currently held by the Democrats.

Republican candidates seemed well-positioned to win four of the six handsomely — Lt. Gov. Michael DeWine in Ohio; Reps. John Kyl in Arizona and Olympia Snowe in Maine; and actor-lawyer Fred Thompson in Tennessee. In the others, Jim Inhofe was marginally ahead in the polls in Oklahoma and veteran Republican campaign aide Spencer Abraham was in a toss-up race with Democratic Rep. Loh Carr in Michigan.

Republican Rep. Craig Thomas in Wyoming and former Gov. John Ashcroft in Missouri were heavily favoured to hold two open Senate seats now the Republican hands. The third Republican seat pitted Republican Rep. Rod Grams and former Democratic legislator Ann Wynn in Minnesota, one of the tightest races in the nation. Mr. Clinton was returning there for the second time in three days.

Open seats aside, Democratic incumbents Chuck Robb in Virginia, Harris Wofford in Pennsylvania, Jim Sasser in Tennessee and Diane Feinstein in California were in tough races.

Virginia's race, in particular, drew nationwide attention for Oliver North's Republican candidacy — and Virginia Republican Sen. John Warner's embrace of the independent in the race, Marshall Coleman.

There was no more controversial candidate this fall than Col. North, whose Iran-

contra conviction was set aside by an appeals court, as a string of Republicans from former President Ronald Reagan on down questioned his truthfulness.

"I don't know of any flawless candidates running for the Senate anywhere," countered Senate Republican leader Bob Dole.

Sen. Sasser, seeking a fourth term, became the very embodiment of an endangered incumbent this year. If re-elected, he stands a strong chance of becoming the Democratic leader in the new Senate.

The California race was notable for its money. Republican Rep. Michael Huffington was spending \$25 million or more of his own money to win the seat.

Other races loomed as potential upsets: Republicans said they had a shot to defeat Sen. Jeff Bingaman in New Mexico. Democrats said they were closing on Sen. Slade Gorton in Washington, where Mr. Clinton scheduled a Sunday stop, and Sen. James Jeffords in Vermont, where Vice President Al Gore campaigned Saturday. Ironically, one of the most endangered Democrats of September seemed in a relatively safe race: Edward M. Kennedy seeking a sixth term in Massachusetts.

Numbers worked against the Democrats in the House, as well. Of the 52 open seats without an incumbent, 31 are Democratic. Republicans said they had a chance to capture as many as two-thirds of these.

A few dozen Democratic incumbents are in trouble, none more so than Speaker Thomas Foley. Seeking a 16th term from his Spokane, Wash., district, he was battling Republican candidate George Nethercutt — as well as Ross Perot, the National Rifle Association and a term limits group.

Berisha: Albanians rebuff new constitution

TIRANA (R) — Albanian President Sali Berisha said Monday that voters had apparently rejected his government's draft constitution in a referendum which has dealt a blow to the ruling Democratic Party.

"It seems that this option... did not find the approval of the people," Mr. Berisha told a news conference in Tirana.

The referendum Sunday was the first serious test of Mr. Berisha's government since it routed the Socialist Party, the renamed Communists, in a landslide election victory in March 1992.

A stern-faced Berisha said

that although final official results had still to be calculated, he would respect the verdict of the electorate.

"When the people speak, the others must keep silent," he said.

Opposition Socialist Party officials told Reuters their projections indicated nearly two-thirds of the 1.5 million voters rejected the new constitution, which the Socialists branded as authoritarian.

Mr. Berisha had rejected criticism that the constitution would give him too much power. He said it had sufficient checks and balances to ensure Albania became a western-style democracy.

The constitution aimed to establish Albania as a democratic republic with a market economy, guaranteeing private property, freedom of religion and the separation of judicial, executive and legislative powers.

Mr. Berisha declined to say whether a government defeat would mean a dissolution of parliament and early elections.

He said political parties would have to meet to discuss the next steps. They could either agree on fresh elections or the introduction of a new draft constitution to parliament.

Unrest recedes in north Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AFP) — Fundamentalist unrest in northern Pakistan receded Monday after five days of clashes claimed 40 lives, as Islamic militants began to lay down their guns in response to a ceasefire call from their top leader, residents and officials said.

But it was not known whether the security forces were able to enter a key stronghold of the militants — the town of Mawla — where activists of Tazmeem Nifaz-e-Shariat Mohammedi (TNSM) group had been holding scores of hostages.

The five districts in the troubled Malakand Division of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) remained tense, although the paramilitary Frontier Constabulary restored order in the main town of Mingora, officials said.

In the district of Dir in Malakand, a police constable was shot dead late Sunday at the town of Timargarah.

Finnish assembly to decide on EU after Sweden poll

HELSINKI (R) — Finnish opponents of the European Union succeeded Sunday in delaying parliament's decision on membership until after a Nov. 13 referendum in neighbouring Sweden.

A parliament spokesman said speaker Riitta Uusikainen would propose Monday to the speaker's conference, which decides on parliament's agenda, that the third and final reading of the EU bill start on Nov. 14.

He described the decision by the speaker's conference Monday as a "formality."

Under the original timetable, the vote on membership of the European Union (EU) was due Tuesday or Wednesday — before the Swedish plebiscite.

But the long debate during the first reading of the EU bill, extended by EU opponents' filibustering tactics, made this impossible. Ms. Uusikainen told the Finnish News Agency (STT).

EU opponents, led by former Foreign Minister Paavo Vayrynen, have kept the debate during the first reading going virtually around the clock since last Wednesday.

Finnish voters for membership of the EU in a referendum on Oct. 16. A two-thirds majority is needed in parliament for final approval.

Most MPs regard outcome of the plebiscite as morally binding.

A newspaper survey published Friday said 150 members of the 200-seat legislature, well above the majority needed, have decided to vote for membership.

But some EU opponents wanted to postpone the parliamentary decision until after the Swedish referendum — apparently hoping that a "no" in Sweden could help swing more Finnish MPs against.

They say membership would harm Finland's sovereignty and that it could be disastrous for rural areas struggling with arctic or sub-arctic weather conditions.



Chairman of Supreme Soviet, President Imomali Rakhmonov, fighting to keep his post as head of state, stands at the ballot box after casting his ballot among the first of his fellow-countrymen to vote in presidential election in Tajikistan (AFP photo)

Rakhmonov wins Tajik presidential election

DUSHANBE (R) — Acting head of state Imomali Rakhmonov won Tajikistan's first presidential election, taking 60 per cent of the vote according to official preliminary results announced Monday.

His opponent, former Prime Minister Abduljalil Abdullajonov, won 35 per cent in Sunday's contest, said Electoral Commission spokesman Murob Kabirov.

"The most important thing is that the elections were held," Mr. Kabirov told reporters.

Mr. Rakhmonov, who is chairman of parliament, polled 1,434,437 votes while Mr. Abdullajonov, now the former Soviet republic's ambassador in Moscow, received 835,861.

Mr. Rakhmonov's supporters say his victory will give him the necessary executive power to tackle serious problems such as the dire state of the economy. He will also be able to appoint and sack ministers.

But some analysts say the election is unlikely to help resolve the deep economic and social problems in the Central Asian country, where clan loyalty is seen as more important than ideology.

Most of the former Communist government's real opposition, an alliance of Islamic groups and liberals,

did not take part in the election, saying it had no time to prepare.

Many of the opposition's leaders are in exile in Afghanistan, from where their guerrillas have been launching cross-border raids since losing a civil war in late 1992.

The government and opposition agreed in Islamabad last week to extend a fragile ceasefire for three months.

Official figures put the election turnout at 95 per cent of the 2.61 million voters. Some five per cent of ballots were spoiled.

Mr. Kabirov said returns had not come in from the western district of Tursunzade and international observers had gone there to see why.

Mr. Abdullajonov's team alleged Sunday there had been cases of ballot boxes being fraudulently stuffed with votes for Mr. Rakhmonov and said other votes had been tampered with.

A member of Mr. Abdullajonov's team said Monday they would consult their candidate and make an official statement.

"Our opinion remains the same. There were falsification," he said.

The Electoral Commission said there had been no official complaints of vote-rigging.

Charles opens environment forum in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (R) — Half a world away from the latest newspaper disclosures about his estranged wife, Britain's Prince Charles got to grips Monday with one of his favourite topics — the environment.

Prince Charles spent the second full day of his visit to Hong Kong by addressing an international congress on the environment in one of the most polluted corners of what remains of the British empire.

Security was tight and police bundled two would-be protesters away before they had a chance to protest about anything. Otherwise the visit attracted little attention from the colony's still-British subjects.

Hong Kong reverts to China on June 30, 1997.

Admitting his mouth felt "like the inside of a parrot's cage" after his non-stop flight from Los Angeles Saturday, Prince Charles made his familiar plea for more humane, green and sustainable urban planning to an audience that needed no convincing.

The pool of British journalists, dubbed the rat pack, which normally dogs every royal footstep on public occasions was smaller than normal but most said the prince appeared unusually relaxed and cheerful.

On Tuesday, Prince Charles will visit parts of Hong Kong's massive new \$20.3 billion airport — work on which could endanger the rare pink Chinese dophin. He will also address a British Chamber of Commerce luncheon and view a passing out parade for Gurkha soldiers.

On Wednesday he visits a

public housing estate and views an experimental farm before departing for London.

Extracts published Sunday from a new book on Prince Charles' estranged wife, the Princess of Wales, said she is planning high-profile return to public life.

But Princess Diana is delaying the announcement of a divorce from the heir to Britain's throne, believing time is on her side and a waiting game in her interests, the extracts said.

An official of an organisation set up by Prince Charles has resigned following the publication of a biography of the prince detailing the break-up of his marriage and his adultery, the Daily Telegraph reported Monday.

Colin Byrne, 37, communications director of the Business Leaders' Forum, resigned when extracts of the biography began appearing in serial form in a Sunday newspaper last month, the report said.

Mr. Byrne is an associate of Tony Blair, leader of the opposition Labour Party.

British newspaper Monday pored over the latest portrayal of Princess Diana as a sad, lonely but determined woman, besetted with her sons and eager for love and power.

Reporting on excerpts from a new biography published Sunday, some highlighted Princess Diana's fears that her estranged husband Prince Charles had hired a woman aide, Alexandra Legge-Bourke, to act as a "surrogate mother" for Prince William, 12, and Prince Harry, 10.

Others focused on the claim in Diana — Her New

Life by royal author Andrew Morton that the princess, a long-time sufferer from the eating disorder bulimia nervosa, was using the mood-altering "designer drug" Prozac to try to cure it.

Mr. Morton's book, to be published Tuesday, also says, according to the serialisation in the Sunday Times, that Princess Diana wants to remarry and have more children — preferably girls — but is waiting for Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, to make the first move to divorce.

The Daily Mirror said Monday it had found the safe house where Prince Charles and his long-time friend Camilla Parker Bowles, whose role in Prince Charles' life made Princess Diana wildly jealous, were still meeting. It said the couple spent up to an hour a day on the phone if they could not meet in person.

Unlike a biography published last week of Prince Charles by journalists Jonathan Dimbleby, which told of the heir's adultery with Camilla while branding Princess a hysterical and conniving woman, Mr. Morton's book has no official backing.

Buckingham Palace described Mr. Morton's book as "a mishmash of tedious and secondhand gossip" and said its claims that Prince Charles and Princess Diana had already discussed divorce were untrue.

Some tabloids said Princess Diana, 33, had denied any involvement in the book, which quotes lawyers as telling her she can expect the equivalent of up to \$25 million in any divorce.

The palace confirmed that Princess Diana would head a new campaign by the British Red Cross, a sign that she is returning to public life after a self-imposed year-long exile.

The princess' new role, in the face of hostile courtiers who wanted to see her crushed or even sent into exile alone, testifies to her strength despite the troubles which have caused her so much misery, Mr. Morton claims.

The Sun, Britain's best-selling newspaper, led its report of his new book with the story that Princess Diana slashed her arms with scissors in a half-hearted suicide attempt aboard a royal jet shortly before her separation from Prince Charles two years ago.

"She hacked at her arms... after a blazing row with Prince Charles. As blood pumped from the cuts, Di smeared it over the walls," it said.

Mr. Morton also says that Princess Diana has become increasingly lonely. She even ate her Christmas dinner alone last year at her London home, a state apartment in Kensington Palace, while the rest of the royal family were gathered at Queen Elizabeth's Norfolk County estate, Sandringham.

The Sun also dwelled on the report that Princess Diana's ideal man would be clean-cut, smart, well-spoken, courteous and with a wry sense of humour — in other words, a lot like Prince Charles.

Among her idols are English actor Tom Conti and U.S. film star Tom Cruise, it said.

UAE spent \$79m on marriage fund

ABU DHABI (R) — A fund set up by the United Arab Emirates to help men pay for costly weddings to local women has lent out 290 million dirhams (\$79 million) in the last two years, the Emirates' Al Itihad newspaper reported Sunday. It quoted the fund's Director-General Jamal Al Beh as saying more than 4,600 young UAE men had been lent money since May 1993 to help cover the high costs of local weddings. The fund was set up by UAE President Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan Al Nahayan. Its soft loans are intended as an incentive to local men not to opt for less costly weddings to foreign women. About three quarters of the UAE's two million people are foreign expatriates.

Man with knife held at Asahi newspaper HQ

TOKYO (AFP) — A man armed with a large kitchen knife was arrested Monday at the Tokyo head office of a major Japanese daily, the Asahi Shimbun, police and Asahi officials said. No one was hurt in the incident, they added. The 41-year-old man, whose name has been withheld, appeared at the reception desk with the knife and was quoted as saying: "Bring me the editor." He was reportedly demanding to deliver a "manifesto" to the editor. Police rushed to the scene and arrested the man at midday for illegal possession of a weapon in violation of the Firearms and Sword Control Law. The man had been in a mental hospital since January in Hiroshima in western Japan, and had obtained permission for a day release, an Asahi official said. The man reportedly proclaimed in his manifesto that he wanted to go the way of the late Yukio Mishima, a writer known for his ultra-nationalist views, who committed ritual suicide in 1973. However, a spokesman at the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department said it was not yet known whether the man had been involved in right-wing activities. Asahi has been the target of frequent attacks, particularly by night-ists. In October last year, a former leader of the rightist Taibakai group killed himself in the office of an Asahi Shimbun executive. In April, two members of the same group held two executives hostage at the Asahi head office in protest at what they called the "wicked influence" of the mass media on society. The captors eventually surrendered and the hostages were freed unharmed.

Japanese plan replica Titanic as hotel

LONDON (R) — A full-size replica of the doomed liner Titanic is to be built in Asia for a Japanese company to use as a floating hotel. Britain's Independent On Sunday newspaper said. "The plans are being provided by a construction company in Northern Ireland where the original ship was launched in 1911," it said. "Mivan Marine, which specialises in refitting cruise ships, has just finished drawing up interior plans for the new vessel. It refuses to name the Japanese client." A spokesman for the firm said, "It will be full scale, exactly like the original, except there will be no engines or steering mechanism." "It is the most horrible idea," said 82-year-old Briton Millvina Dean, a survivor from the Titanic which sank in 1912.

Craft festival attracts record attendance

OUAGADOUGOU (AFP) — Organisers of a major craft festival in Burkina Faso celebrated their largest ever attendance Sunday, although many foreign exhibitors complained that after taxes they had done little more than break even. Around 250,000 people attended the fourth International Artisans Festival of Ouagadougou (Salon International de l'Artisanat de Ouagadougou — SIAO) since it opened on Oct. 29, organisers said after its official closure Saturday. The figure is 100,000 up on the previous event held in 1992. Although the SIAO finance commission estimates that around 120 million CFA francs (\$230,000) were collected from stand fees, foreign exhibitors were required to pay a per cent duty to bring their goods into the west African country while sales carried an additional per cent tax.

Rains ki

MIAMI (R) — A heavy rainstorm hit the city of Miami on Sunday, causing significant damage to property and infrastructure. The storm, which lasted for several hours, brought with it strong winds and heavy rain, leading to flooding in several areas. Power lines were downed, and some buildings sustained structural damage. The city is currently assessing the damage and working to restore services as quickly as possible.

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UAE spent \$79m on marriage fund

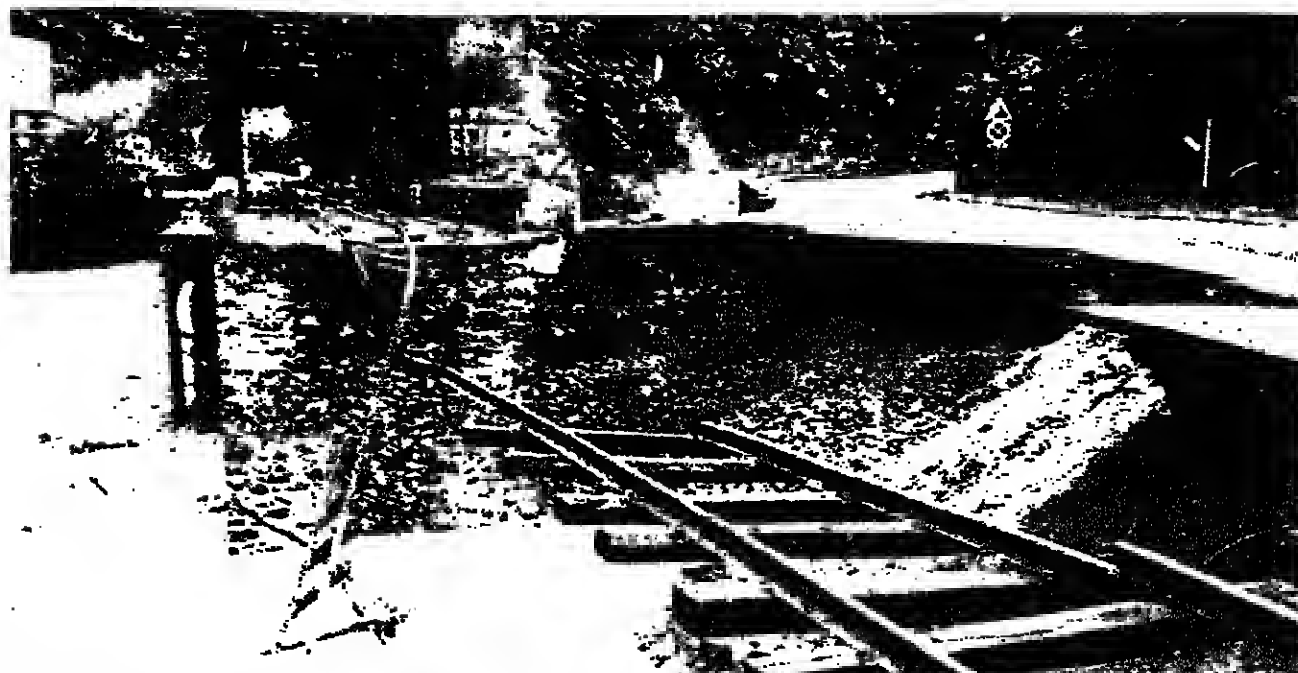
ABU DHABI, U.A.E. — The United Arab Emirates has spent \$79 million on a marriage fund to help poor couples get married, a move that has drawn criticism from some women's rights groups.

The fund, set up by the government, provides financial assistance to couples who cannot afford to get married. It has been criticized for being a waste of money, especially in a country where many women are not allowed to work or receive an education.

Man with knife held at Asahi newspaper HQ

YOKOHAMA, Japan — A man with a knife was held at the headquarters of the Asahi newspaper on Monday. The man, who was identified as a former employee of the newspaper, was holding a knife and threatening the staff.

The incident occurred in the early morning hours. The man was eventually subdued by security guards and taken to a nearby police station. He is currently being held on charges of attempted murder and possession of a dangerous weapon.



A railway track is destroyed and the main N202 road has collapsed following floods caused by torrential rain which caused much damage in the south of France (AFP photo)

Rains kill scores in southern Europe

MILAN, Italy (AP) — Heavy weekend flooding cut off entire villages in southern Europe, leaving rescuers Monday struggling to reach 10 trapped cave explorers and families buried beneath the rubble of their homes.

At least 60 deaths were reported and in Italy, 25 people were missing. The rain lashed some of the worst areas in northern Italy, the worst area hit. But was expected to continue during the day.

Schools, hotels and even a train opened their doors to the thousands of people rendered homeless. Many people were plucked from their rooftops by helicopters or rescued by motorboat.

The flooding swept away bridges and pieces of highway, cut off hundreds of villages and forced the closing of Nice International Airport until Tuesday.

Italy's Piedmont region suffered the worst. Sixty centimetres (24 inches) of rain fell over 60 hours as of late Sunday.

Flooding also hit the northern regions Liguria, Lombardy and Val D'Aosta, which had 3 metres of snow in Alpine sections. Heavy rains fell over much of central Italy, Sicily and the Naples area.

Italian officials said an army of 20,000 firefighters, police and volunteers was deployed.

Ombretta Fumagalli Carulli, the government's Civil Defence chief, said the deluge was the worst since 1913. The service Monday morning reported that at least 34 people in northern Italy had died over the weekend in weather-related deaths.

Opposition leaders blasted the government for lack of preparation, warnings and timely aid.

"In the face of such a vast disaster... anyone could say we could do better," said Chief Carulli.

Much of Asti, a city of 74,000 people, was under 3 metres (9 feet) of water, and large areas of the town were without gas, electricity or phone service. Two thousand people fled their homes. In the city, two hospitals and one of Italy's largest munitions dumps were flooded.

Authorities were evacuating residents from Moutaito Dora, a small Piedmontese town threatened by a wall of water behind a dam on the verge of bursting, the ANSA news agency said.

Two homes for the elderly were evacuated in Cuoco, south of Turin, Piedmont's largest city. The soccer match between Turin's two first division teams, Juventus and Torino, was rained out.

Flooding locked up traffic on most of the major highways in northern Italy, where lines of cars snaked for miles. Hundreds of farm fields were submerged.

In San Raffaele Cimena, near Turin, a three-story building collapsed, killing a woman. Her 5-month-old daughter was rescued, but her parents and another daughter were missing.

Phones, water, electricity and roads also were cut in hundreds of villages across southern France. Spain and across the Mediterranean in Morocco.

In France, where six people died, floods forced the Nice-Cote D'Azur International Airport to close Sunday until at least 6 a.m. (0500 GMT) Tuesday. Flights were rerouted to Marseille and Toulon.

The runways were submerged, terminal basements flooded, and telephone switchboards and passenger registration equipment knocked out. The ground-level boarding lounges lay under 30 centimetres of mud.

Rains slamming Morocco for several days killed at least 15 people, the newspaper L'Opinion reported Sunday. Flooding ravaged destroyed homes, swept away livestock and destroyed bridges and roads.



A house leans over after debris of a collapsed church hit the building following floods, leaving four people dead. Torrential rains ravaging the northern Mediterranean have left many people dead or missing in northern Italy, according to the television station RAI-Lao, quoting incomplete reports from emergency services (AFP photo)

Chirac impresses on TV debut as candidate

PARIS (R) — Gaullist party leader Jacques Chirac impressed pundits with his first television performance as French presidential candidate, espousing a more social conservatism and seeking to deter his main party rival from running against him.

Mr. Chirac, 61, twice defeated for the presidency by Socialist Francois Mitterrand in 1981 and 1988, appeared calmer and more self-confident than in his previous campaigns, analysts said.

In an exchange illustrating his new-found ease on camera, the previously wooden Paris mayor was asked Sunday whether voters would not groan, "Chirac again?"

"With a warm smile, he said: 'I hope they'll say: Chirac, at last.'"

Setting out his differences from party rival and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, he called for bolder action to fight France's record 12.7 per cent unemployment and give the poor more purchasing power.

He sought to win over those sceptical about Europe by promising a referendum before France joins a single European currency, which he ruled out this century.

By declaring his candidacy six months ahead of the election, Mr. Chirac's aim was to rally as much of the right behind him as early as possible and thus intimidate fellow-Gaullist Balladur, who leads him in opinion polls, into staying out of the race.

Mr. Balladur has said he will state his intentions in January, but aides make no secret of his determination to run.

One leading Balladur supporter, Parliamentarian Patrick Devedjian, said the best thing about Mr. Chirac's television performance was that "he didn't rule out withdrawing."

The first poll taken since Mr. Chirac announced his candidacy Friday showed he had almost caught up with Mr. Balladur as the voters' preferred conservative contender with 15 per cent to the premier's 16 per cent.

Jacques Delors, the outgoing European Commission president and likely Socialist candidate, led them both on 20 per cent.

A special congress of the Gaullist RPR party is expected to acclaim Mr. Chirac without formally endorsing him next Saturday, leaving Mr. Balladur with the uncomfortable option of effectively running against his own party.

Mr. Chirac skillfully trotted a line between loyalty to Mr. Balladur's centre-right government and support for a radical alternative policy advocated by Gaullist National Assembly speaker Philippe Seguin, leader of France's "no" to European Union campaign.

Mr. Seguin's "other policy" would give a state-driven fight against unemployment priority over currency stability, a balanced budget and free trade.

Without attacking Mr. Balladur by name, Mr. Chirac criticised "lukewarm" government and "financial fundamentalism," and said: "France won't recover with a policy of little steps."

He said he had given Mr. Balladur his support and friendship, implying the prime minister had betrayed him by pursuing his own presidential ambitions.

The divorce between the two men will be sealed symbolically Wednesday, anniversary of the death of General Charles de Gaulle. Mr. Chirac will lead Gaullist parliamentarians at a wreath laying ceremony in Colombey-Les-deux-Eglises in the morning. Mr. Balladur will go there separately in the afternoon.

Meanwhile outgoing European Commission President Jacques Delors, due to leave Brussels at the end of the year and believed to be preparing to stand for the French presidency, is to publish a new book of his political thoughts.

"L'Unité D'Un Homme" (The Unity Of A Man), a political testament, will be published Tuesday by the 69-year-old Delors, thought likely to be the main leftist candidate in French presidential elections next year.

"I hope that the reader will gain a clearer view on our common history," writes the former Socialist minister in the book's introduction.

The book, published by Odile Jacob, is based on interviews with Mr. Delors, who will leave his Brussels job at the end of the year. He is expected to announce his candidacy for the French presidency at the end of January, three months ahead of the two-round poll.

Cambodia rules out major dry-season offensive

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh ruled out Monday any major military offensive against the outlawed Khmer Rouge during Cambodia's forthcoming dry season.

"Speaking in my capacity of commander-in-chief of the armed forces, there will not be any large-scale dry-season offensive," the prince told reporters following a seminar on regional peace and development.

"What we are going to do instead is to try to encourage the low-ranking Khmer Rouge to defect," he said.

Military activity traditionally increases during the dry season as the government forces move against Khmer Rouge strongholds.

During the country's heavy monsoon rain season, it is nearly impossible for the army to move the necessary numbers of men and heavy equipment into the remote areas where the Khmer Rouge have their major bases.

The outlawed guerrilla faction controls some 10 per cent of the country, most of it jungle and mountainous terrain in the north and northwest along the Thai-Cambodian border.

Prince Ranariddh said the government's policy would be to try to contain the guerrillas in these areas and to stop them infiltrating and taking supplies to smaller hands of Khmer Rouge elsewhere in the country.

The guerrillas also have small bases — which King Norodom Sihanouk has described as "leopard's spots" — in isolated areas in many other parts of the country.

"We have to contain the Khmer Rouge in their areas and to wipe out the leopard spots," Prince Ranariddh said, adding that the government would concentrate on "psychological operations and development" to undermine any support for the guerrillas and to lure the rank and file into defecting.

Meanwhile a foreign source close to the investigation said Monday three Western hostages murdered by Khmer Rouge guerrillas were clubbed to death.

"They were bound. The three died from massive head injuries," said the source.

The report contradicts earlier accounts that the hostages were shot at point-blank range.

Bosnia Muslims, Croats pound Serbs



Bosnian army General Mehmed Alagic (left) congratulates his Croatian Defence Council Kupares in Bosnia (AFP photo) counterpart Josip Cerny as they meet with

KUPRES, Bosnia (R) — Bosnian Muslim and Croat artillery Monday pounded Bosnian Serb Army units blocking a push by government forces towards the central Bosnian town of Donji Vakuf, a Reuters correspondent at the scene said.

They hit the Serbs with up to 400 shells in 90 minutes north of Kupres, which Muslim troops captured from the Bosnian Serb Army under cover of Croat artillery.

Reuters correspondent Kurt Schork said Muslim and Croat forces opened up with Howitzers, mortars, tank and multi-barrelled rocket launchers in the attack on Serbs some five kilometres north of Kupres.

The Bosnian Serb units were defending access to Donji Vakuf which United Nations peacekeepers expected to be one of the next targets for government troops waging an offensive to northwest and central Bosnia and around the capital Sarajevo.

Offensives and counter-offensives by Bosnian government forces and the Serbs should produce a new military balance in the Bosnian war and could encourage fresh peace talks, U.N. envoy Yasushi Akashi said Monday.

Speaking at a meeting of top U.N. officials to discuss the worsening crisis in Bosnia, Mr. Akashi said the new military situation might persuade the Serbs to reconsider a major power peace plan they have so far rejected.

Mr. Akashi told Reuters Television that fighting was going on around the north-western Bihac pocket, around Kupres in central Bosnia and in the Sarajevo district.

"I think the government forces will continue to press Serbs for more territory, so the situation does not allow for much optimism," said Mr. Akashi, the top U.N. official in former Yugoslavia.

"Sooner or later I think there will be a military balance. I think Serbs will counter-attack against Bosnian offensives, but I think at some point balance will be achieved," he added.

Asked if Serbs might relent on their rejection of current major power peace proposals, Mr. Akashi said: "At the moment, as you know, the Bosnian Serb attitude is 'no' to the contact group proposal. But with the change of situation, they may become more amenable to talking with the contact group."

The Bosnian government army is planning fresh offensives against Serb forces to build on its recent field successes, the United Nations said Monday.

U.N. military spokesman Major Koos Sol said the Muslims had captured more territory north of Sarajevo and there were signs they were preparing to advance from the central Bosnian town of Bugojno towards Donji Vakuf.

Serb forces threatened to remove heavy weapons from U.N. control and deploy them against the Muslims unless they stop their offensives around Sarajevo.

But the U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, said the military situation around Sarajevo had calmed down after the United Nations warned that the latest fighting was endangering the peace process.

"We approached both sides about the outbreak of fighting," he said.

"They heeded the warnings I gave them that this was a very serious departure and, if it continued, would probably be the end of the peace process, not only here in Sarajevo, but ultimately fear in the whole country and this would not be in the interests of the people of this country."

In Sarajevo, the U.N. ordered NATO warplanes to fly over the city for a second day Sunday as tensions remained high following a weekend artillery clash between Muslims and Serbs.

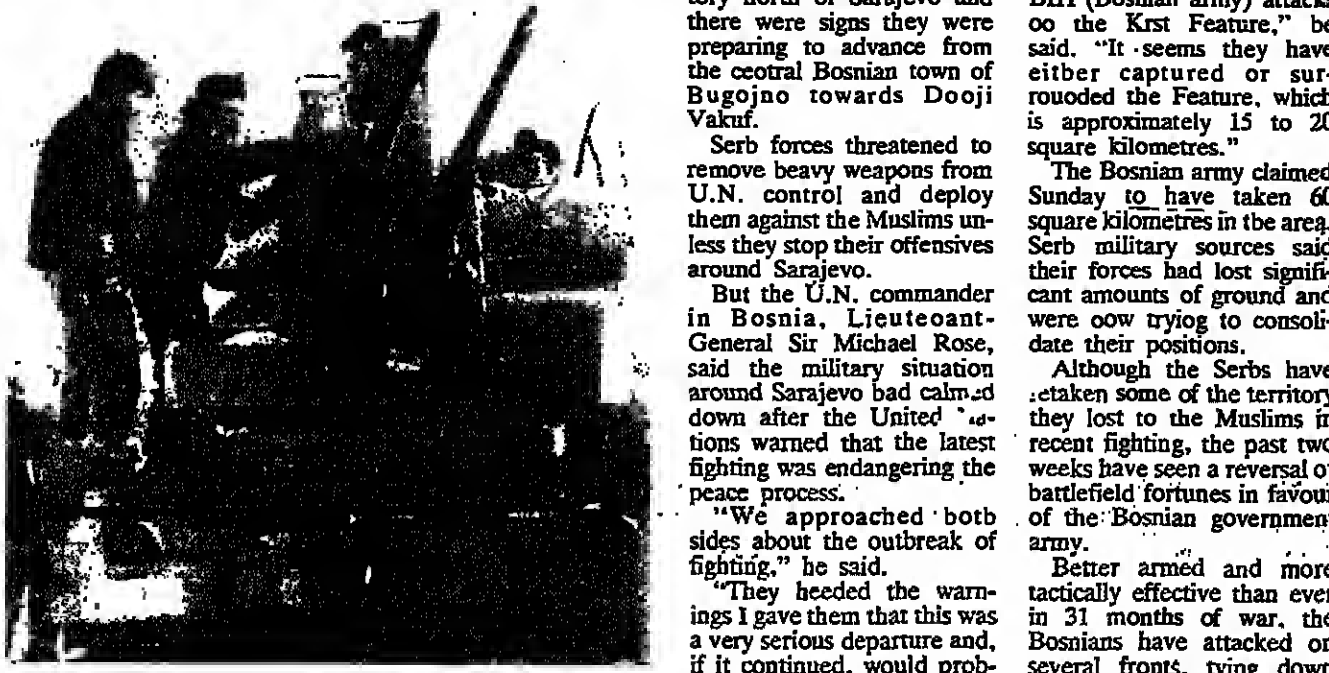
Maj. Sol said the Bosnian army had taken important high ground, identified by the U.N. as the Krst Feature, about 25 kilometres north of the capital and were threatening to cut off Serb forces in the area.

"We have some reports of BIH (Bosnian army) attacks on the Krst Feature," he said. "It seems they have either captured or surrounded the Feature, which is approximately 15 to 20 square kilometres."

The Bosnian army claimed Sunday to have taken 60 square kilometres in the area. Serb military sources said their forces had lost significant amounts of ground and were now trying to consolidate their positions.

Although the Serbs have taken some of the territory they lost to the Muslims in recent fighting, the past two weeks have seen a reversal of battlefield fortunes in favour of the Bosnian government army.

Better armed and more tactically effective than ever in 31 months of war, the Bosnians have attacked on several fronts, tying down Serb forces which are short of men and fuel.



Bosnia Serb load a 22mm anti-aircraft cannon some 10km south of the northwestern Bosnian town of Bihac (AFP photo)

Berlusconi rejects Bossi call to ditch neo-fascists

ROME (AFP) — Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi rejected Monday a proposal by coalition partner Northern League boss Umberto Bossi that he should form a new government and throw out the neo-fascist National Alliance (AN).

AN party leader Gianfranco Fini, reacting to a speech at the weekend in which Mr. Bossi strongly criticised him, said the government faced a break-up over the League's plans for a federal Italy.

Mr. Berlusconi was replying in a regular weekly interview broadcast on state radio to points made by Mr. Bossi Sunday at a "federal assembly" of his party's leaders in the northern port city of Genoa.

The Northern League, which has five ministers in the government, was reviewing its difficult relationship with its ruling coalition allies. There are divisions over the attitude to the government the League should adopt.

After presenting his party's programme for a federal state, Mr. Bossi asked League members to "verify" with coalition allies the validity of existing government accords once a new finance bill currently under debate was adopted.

He also suggested the AN should be "expelled" from the government team, although he did not call for early elections.

Mr. Berlusconi however rejected a change in the current government team, made up of his Forza Italia party, the Northern League, the AN party, centrist Christian Democrats and the Radicals.

Such a move "would betray the mandate given by voters" in the general election in March, he said.

The Northern League MPs and senators "were all elected thanks to the determining vote of Forza Italia electors and with an extremely clear indication of a government majority and a programme," Mr. Berlusconi said.

He warned that if the party wished to "make such a profound change," in its allegiances it should go back to the voters.

In an allusion to his desire to see former Christian Democrats of the Popolare Party (PPI) on the government team, Mr. Berlusconi said the current coalition could "open up to other democratic forces."

Russian rallies celebrate Bolshevik Revolution

MOSCOW (R) — Thousands of Russians, disenchanted with market reforms which have plunged them into poverty, marched through central Moscow Monday to celebrate the 77th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

The demonstration, which ended in a rally, quickly turned into the biggest protest against President Boris Yeltsin this year. Police said there were about 15,000 demonstrators.

"The current leadership is a group of political thieves and economic impostors," said Ivan Shashvashvili, a former deputy in the old Russian parliament, dissolved by Yeltsin in 1993.

"It is just one pack of wolves... belonging in a political dustbin," he said to applaud and cheers.

But the occasion was a mere shadow of the huge Soviet-era festivities in mark the holiday, when enterprises and organisations sent their employees to march across Red Square in front of Lenin's Mausoleum.

Moscow authorities had forbidden the protesters to enter Red Square, so the march ended at the former KGB Headquarters at Lubyanka Square, once named after Soviet secret police founder Felix Dzerzhinsky.

In a supreme insult to those nostalgic for the old Soviet Union, authorities allowed Western clowns to perform in Red Square at the same time.

In Soviet days the speakers used the red marble mausoleum for their addresses. On Monday they spoke from a battered truck.

Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov said his party and parliamentary faction, one of the largest, had started collecting signatures to hold a referendum on an early presidential election.

"Today we must say 'no,'" he said.

The protesters, mainly middle-aged and elderly, carried a sea of red flags and banners attacking Mr. Yeltsin and his government.

The demonstration started on the former October Square under the last big statue of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin left in the Russian capital.

"Traitors out of the Kremlin," read one slogan, "no to the president, yes to Soviet power," said another. For the first time in recent memory the demonstrators carried more portraits of dictator Josef Stalin than of Lenin.

Musicians accompanied the protesters on their march in sub-zero temperatures. Police maintained a low-key presence and no incidents were reported.

Similar protests were held big cities and other parts of the former Soviet Union. In Ukraine, Communists and nationalists staged rival demonstrations in the centre of the capital Kiev, kept apart by some 4,000 police.

Police and nationalist demonstrators traded blows with truncheons and flag poles, but only a few minor injuries were reported.

In St. Petersburg, about 8,000 people marched along the Nevsky Prospect central avenue.

Pro-Communist demonstrators shout anti-government slogans during a demonstration celebrating the 77th anniversary of the Russian October Revolution in Moscow in which around 15,000 people participated (AFP photo)



Japanese plan replica Titanic as hotel

YOKOHAMA, Japan — A Japanese company is planning to build a replica of the Titanic as a hotel. The hotel, which is expected to be completed in 2000, will be a 12-story building that will look exactly like the ship.

The hotel is being built in Yokohama, Japan. It is expected to be a major attraction for tourists, especially those who are interested in the Titanic. The hotel will have a museum on board, and there will be a restaurant and a bar.

Craft festival attracts record attendance

YOKOHAMA, Japan — A craft festival held in Yokohama on Monday attracted a record attendance of over 100,000 people. The festival, which was held in a park, featured a wide variety of crafts, including pottery, woodwork, and textiles.

The festival was organized by the city of Yokohama. It was a great success, and the organizers are planning to hold it again next year. The festival was a great opportunity for people to see and buy some of the best crafts in Japan.

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 6671716, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

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The peace is for all

NOTWITHSTANDING Israel's lukewarm reception to Iraq's declaration that it no longer regards itself as a "confrontation state" with the Jewish state, the recent pronouncement of Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz is indeed a very positive development and should be welcomed by all parties to the peace process. The importance of Baghdad's recent move in the direction of ending the state of war with Israel has to be gauged and seen in the context of regional peace. Without Iraq joining the political effort, there will always be serious gaps in the circle of peace that is increasingly gaining momentum in the area. With Jordan and the PLO now committed to renouncing war as an option to settle their differences with Israel, and Syria and Lebanon remaining not too far behind in signing and ratifying peace treaties with the Jewish state, there is no question that Iraq's acceptance of the peace process is indispensable to its completion. The Casablanca conference last week envisaged the creation of a common market comprising not some of the states of the Middle East and North Africa but rather the entire community of states in these two regions of the world. That is why the cultivation of peaceful relations between Iraq and Israel is so vital and necessary.

We may understand Israel's hangups in dealings with Iraq which stems essentially from the refusal of the U.S. and its principal allies to deal with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made this stance loud and clear when he responded to Aziz's offer of an olive branch by saying Sunday that "Israel's enemy is not Iraq as a state or people." Peres went on to add that his country's problem was with Saddam Hussein. This is essentially the identical position of Washington which refuses all modes of accommodation with the current regime in Baghdad no matter how far it goes to implement the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions adopted in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis in 1991. No wonder Israel's secret contacts with Baghdad last summer had to be suspended apparently when news leaked out that some Israeli ministers, notably Iraqi-born Minister of Police Moshe Shahal and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer, were conducting some discrete contacts with Baghdad in a bid to nudge it closer to the peace process. We believe that Iraq's offer of peace should be encouraged rather than rejected out of hand. The issue and cause of peace in the region transcends personalities. Peace in the Middle East is a phenomenon affecting states' behaviour in the future and no state actions in the past. All states in the region which are now affixing their seals of approval on one peace treaty after the other had in the past engaged in the most hostile activities against one another. Peace calls for looking forward and not backward. That is why we support Baghdad's change of heart and its willingness to be part of a new Middle East.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ENDORSEMENT of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty with a large majority in Parliament Sunday reflected the overall public support for the deal as expressed by various sectors in the past weeks, said Al-Dustur Monday. The result of the voting was a further manifestation of the people's backing for His Majesty the King and his wise leadership and policies, which draw on decades of experience in handling the Kingdom's affairs, the paper noted. Jordan is not the first country to reach a peace treaty with another, and it will not be the last; neither did Jordan ever abandon solidarity among Arab states or give up endeavours to coordinate policies with other Arab parties regarding pan-Arab questions, continued the daily. It said that Jordanians have all the reason for rejoicing over the ratification of the treaty, which aims at restoring their lost rights in land and water and secures the Kingdom's boundaries. At the same time, said the paper, the treaty does not close the door in the face of other parties' efforts to regain their own rights, neither does it weaken any Arab country's attempts to attaining its national objectives.

THE GOVERNMENT has a chance to neutralise the Jordanian-Islamists and keep them away from the chaotic actions of fundamentalists in other parts of the world, said a columnist in Al-Rai Monday. The government can secure this goal by adopting a rational policy of listening to the Islamists' views on various matters, by coordinating policies with them where ever that is possible and by benefiting from their new ideas within the democratic system, said Jihad Momani. Stressing that Jordanian Islamists are different in nature and orientation from those in Algeria and Egypt, the writer said that they have proved to be worthy of confidence and are continually aiming to safeguard national interests under the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein. Jordanian Islamists, he added, have not resorted to acts of violence nor have they shown their hostility to other parties. He said Jordanian Islamists demand what is reasonable and never cross the red line.

The View from Fourth Circle

The complex context, consequences of peace-making

By Rami G. Khouri

THE ENORMOUS but as yet unknown ultimate implications of the peace-making now going on in the Middle East should prompt us to take a dispassionate, comprehensive view of the changes taking place throughout the Middle East, so as to be able to position ourselves for optimum national development and wellbeing. The context, motives and logistics of peace-making are important to recognise in order to be able to anticipate the possible consequences of peace.

The context of the post-1991-Madrid process is marked by three main forces: a) the regional adaptation to the end of the cold war, the oil boom era, and the Arab-Israeli conflict, b) the quest for a new, more natural balance among factors such as Arabism, Islam, tribalism, state power and dependencies on global commercial alliances, and, c) a drive by the peoples of our region to overcome the distortions and aberrations of 20th century history, and to reassert the older reality of pan-semitic respect, coexistence and cooperation among Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Middle East, especially in the Levant.

Within this wide and old context, the main motives for peace-making today seem to be: a) enough time has passed — about two generations — for the Israelis to realise that Arabs are not adjuncts of Nazism and for Arabs to realise that Israelis are not adjuncts of Western colonialism, b) both sides are emotionally, nationally and economically exhausted, and suffer debt and dependency so severe that their status and longevity as sovereign states sometimes can be called into question, and c) both sides have been morally degraded by seeing their societies transformed into armed camps, garrison and police states, and fountain-heads of modern terrorism, military occupation and political subjugation.

Consequently the following central logistics of peace-making seem less surprising, and in fact make a great deal of sense: a) the speed with which Israel and Jordan made a full peace, and Israel and the PLO launched their peace process via the Oslo Agreement, b) the manner in which personal, top-level meetings on both fronts instantly resolved very serious disputes and repeatedly pushed the negotiations forward, reflecting powerful motives by the leaderships to make the process work, c) the deep scepticism, hesitation and fears expressed by the people on both sides since September 1993, in contrast with the speedy, consistent eagerness of the political leaderships to move ahead, and, d) the very good terms that Jordan obtained from Israel (because both states viewed one another as sovereign equals and both needed peace urgently), and the very poor terms that the PLO obtained from Israel (because Israel does not recognise the parity of Palestinian-Israeli national rights and the PLO needed peace more urgently than Israel did).

The Jordan-Israel peace accord, a fundamentally fair and sound agreement that I applaud, has elicited strong criticism not so much because of its content for terms, but because of how it fits into this wider regional context. There are four important aspects to this: the contrast between Jordanian and Palestinian gains from peace-making, the show business atmospheres of reconciliation, the frail pan-Arab political condition and Arab relationships with the United States and Israel.

The fact that Jordan obtained virtually all of its sovereign rights and demands from Israel has abruptly highlighted how little the Palestinians have obtained to date. The average person in Jordan and Palestine sees this most brutally reflected in the very different manner in which Israeli leaders deal with Jordanians (with respect, joy and perhaps even some affection) and with Palestinians (with admonishment, threats, coolness and condescension).

Another point of contention for Palestinians and some other Arabs is Israel's formal recognition of a special role for Jordan in negotiating the final status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees. This is a perfectly legitimate and

understandable role for Jordan, given its modern history vis-a-vis Jerusalem and Palestinians, but the problem again arises from the contrast between Jordan's gains and the Palestinians' apparent losses, in what many see to be a zero-sum game in which one side wins and another loses.

The declaration last week by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan at Casablanca that Jordan would relinquish its custody of the holy places in Jerusalem to the Palestinians when there is a sovereign Palestinian authority was most decisive and appropriate; it is precisely the sort of approach that is required today to leap over the small hurdles of suspicion that have been generated by 20th century history, and instead to reinvigorate and reinforce the much older bonds of mutual respect and cooperation that have more routinely defined relations among the small demographic groups of Levantine Semites — the three, ancient monotheistic religions, the modern identities of Jordanians, Palestinians, Israelis, Lebanese and Syrians, and the ethnic mixture of Armenians, Circassians, Kurds, and others who complete our multi-ethnic mosaic. This is Jordan at its very best, as a state, as an embodiment and custodian of humanistic values, and as a purveyor of a principled political and national Arab ethos. This is how we gain as others around us also gain, proving that this is not a zero-sum game, but one in which we all move forward together on the strength of our common fate.

The high-profile, show business manner in which the peace accord was signed in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton, combined with the speed of the Jordanian-Israeli reconciliation and the frenzy by some Arabs to enter into business deals with Israelis, generates two problem emotions among many Arabs, myself included. First, it has hurt our credibility, because we said for many years that we would never go off alone and sign a peace treaty. The fact that other Arabs (Egypt, PLO) bolted and signed unilaterally before us should have ended us to use our peace-making capabilities to try to revive and enhance pan-Arab coordination and cooperation, rather than to bury them. Second, it is awkward nearly to the point of shame for many Jordanians to watch or even to engage in a trans-Semitic peace jamboree with Israel while that same Israel continues to kill, imprison, torture, terrorise, occupy and otherwise dehumanise Palestinians, Lebanese and Syrians.

This is related to the third reality of the peace-making context, which is the atrocious condition of pan-Arab coordination or common action. The Egypt, PLO and Jordan accords with Israel, by formally sanctifying separate deals, have merely verified the ailing Arab national condition. The inability of Arab leaders to forge common action and to capitalise on pan-Arab assets in the last three decades has prompted individual parties and states to save their skins by striking off on their own, under the banner of courage, but also under the protection of the United States.

The fourth problematic aspect of the peace-making context is the relationship between Middle Eastern parties and the United States, now the world's only superpower and the unofficial master of ceremonies of pan-semitic fraternity. This is a special danger for both Jordan and Palestine that we need to watch carefully so as not to fall into a common trap that has ravaged and demeaned many others before us.

It seems that peace-making in the Holy Land is organically if unofficially tied to stronger economic, ideological and strategic ties with the United States, and this is rather troubling to me, for three reasons. First, it breeds increased economic dependence which rarely if ever is sustainable, and usually leads to political autocracy and to socio-economic mediocrity and deterioration. Second, it inevitably confers on the Middle Eastern partner a surrogate status vis-a-vis the distant imperial power that is historically fatal — and always has been, since the days of the Ptolemies and Seleucids, the Herodians, the Palmyrans,

the Nabataeans, the Ghassanids and the many other small entities that tried to survive and thrive on the basis of imperial protection. Third, it always generates intense domestic anger and opposition to a process that many Arabs see not only as political and economic subjugation, but also as forced adoption of alien cultural norms and moral values.

In this respect, it is relevant to review our region over the last 15 years and see the countries that the United States has formally designated as its strategic partners and allies: Iran, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Though they exhibit different levels of economic wealth and face a wide array of domestic challenges, not surprisingly all four of them face significant, in some cases violent and severe, domestic challenges to their prevailing political power structure. They also deal with immense issues of national identity and stability, many of which are a direct consequence of having tried to integrate into the new American empire. They are problematic allies and strategic pivots in many ways.

The other U.S. pals, protectorates and neo-mandates in the Middle East — Kuwait and the Kurds in northern Iraq — are deeply scarred and troubled societies, reflecting the long-term dangers of succumbing to the false promises of imperial protection. Israel, the classic American protégé state, has become the country most censured by the United Nations, the longest military occupier of the 20th century, and a paradigm of racist, anti-Arab violence and militarism. The fact that Arab states must be seen to have come to terms with such an Israeli state and to make overtures to it in economic security and other fields, while its atrocious treatment of Arabs continues, is a further source of frustration today, and a driving force for critics of the Jordan-Israel accord.

These are some of the wider aspects of the peace-making process that we should not lose sight of this critical moment. We certainly do have much to celebrate and to be thankful for, but the real process of peace-making for Jordan has just started; there is plenty of hard work to do to build on the peace accord with Israel. Unlike the Egyptian and Palestinian agreements with Israel, the inherent fairness and reciprocity of the Jordan-Israel accord hold out the possibility of catalysing wider peace and reconciliation in our region — if we methodically move closer to, and improve the prospects for justice in, Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, rather than shooting off on a triumphalist but slippery sigh of relief and business contract faxes.

We should not make the common Semitic mistake of thinking that we have unlocked the key to heaven, or even to our own salvation. Approximately five thousand years of history suggest that the true security and long-term well-being of small corners of the larger Semitic and Levantine landscape are best assured in the context of justice for the entire Semitic family, and the integrated development of the wider Levantine region.

The strength of the Jordan-Israel peace agreement is that it shows how a fair, merciful, reciprocally satisfying and therefore politically palatable peace accord can be structured. Its weakness is that it is being consummated in a regional context in which the other aggrieved Arab parties do not share of its fruits. Our challenge is to make sure that they do, as soon as possible; and that — first justice, then peace and stability, rather than merely surviving, paving streets and keeping the crime rate down to a modest level — will be our great modern, lasting Jordanian triumph. We have taken the first, hardest step towards this noble goal; but our joy at finding ourselves still on our feet should not blind us to two important facts: We have much hard work ahead of us, and we have not started to tackle the really tough job of remaining on our feet thanks to the support of our own regional resources and family, rather than faraway, sometimes fickle donors.



Rwanda's ghosts haunt summit

By Nicholas Kotch
Renter

BIARRITZ, France — Rwanda's seat will be empty at this week's Franco-African summit but the ghosts from one of modern history's greatest genocides will be there, bawling President Francois Mitterrand's farewell to Africa.

It is not the way the ailing, 78-year-old leader would have wished to part from France's favourite continent and from the 28 African heads of state expected to gather around him on Tuesday's opening ceremony.

Without the Rwanda massacres, in which up to one million people were methodically exterminated earlier this year, the biennial summit might have adopted the same relaxed and clubbish mood as its 17 predecessors.

The sheer scale of the slaughter and the fear that it may spread to neighbouring Burundi partly account for the sombre climate at the summit opening on Monday in the southwestern French sea resort of Biarritz.

But more crucially for Mr. Mitterrand, his unflinching military and political support for the former mainly-Hutu Rwandan government is seen by many in both France and Africa as his least excusable error of judgment in foreign policy.

Some of that government's

leading lights are now biding abroad, accused of organising the genocide of minority Tutsis and pro-opposition Hutus. In private, many French diplomats, officials and aid workers in Africa are disgusted by their country's role before the killings began in April and its refusal to make amends since.

Human rights groups plan to hold their own dissenting review of France's Africa policy in Biarritz this week, including a debate on "complicity in genocide" in Rwanda.

Yet the official policy from Paris shows no sign of changing. The new Tutsi-dominated government in Kigali accuses France of orchestrating a campaign to destabilise it, pointing to French efforts at blocking European Union aid money to rebuild the devastated country.

France has declined to invite the new government to Biarritz. "The new team is not stable and they have been abusing as too much recently," a French ambassador in Africa said.

In Kigali, Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu did nothing to cool official tempers in Paris.

"These (Franco-African) summits are picturesque meetings which never produce any important decisions affecting our country," he said last week.

Whatever their private views of France's Rwanda policy, the high turnout by African presidents in any case confirms their perception of France as the only major or medium power which still has a sustained interest in their continent.

With nearly 9,000 French troops stationed in Africa, with 14 African currencies backed by the French franc and with Paris claiming convincingly that it is the single largest source of aid and soft loans to the world's poorest continent, a trip this week to the seaside resort of Biarritz made eminent sense in many presidencies.

Most of the leaders coming to pay their respects to Mr. Mitterrand before he leaves office next year are from former French colonies. But South Africa has pleased Paris by sending Vice-President Thabo Mbeki to its first Franco-African summit.

South Africa's big and modern army will logically be a dominant member of the African peacekeeping force which France would like to see created.

But the happiest president at the summit will probably be Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko. His vital backing for Paris over Rwanda has helped him to emerge from the pariah status which only a year ago meant he and his family were officially banned from visiting France.

Algeria faces up to future with grim death toll

By John Baggaley
Renter

NICOSIA — Departing from their normal secrecy during three years of slaughter and fear, Algerian authorities disclosed that more than 100 people were killed in clashes with Muslim militants in four days last week.

The toll was not extraordinary by recent unofficial reports. Its public and official disclosure was.

The details, given at the weekend by the official agency APS, along with the reported return to prison of two leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), mark a grim switch in efforts by the military-backed authorities to end carnage in which up to 20,000 people have been slain since January 1992.

They give a clear signal to worried European leaders across the Mediterranean that the conflict in Algeria will only be resolved in more killings in bloodstained streets of the overcrowded cities and in the desolate no-man's land of the countryside.

"There will be no indulgence, no letup on our part. We are determined to exterminate all the terrorists," the military commander of the region round the western town of Mostaganem was quoted as saying on Saturday.

There has been scant evidence of "indulgence" in the three years of violence which has made Algeria one of the region's most dangerous countries.

A whirlpool of death, which swirled initially round members of the security forces and armed militants, has sucked in journalists, intellectuals, doctors, government officials, and — in rare savagery in a Muslim country —

children and women.

In contrast, the conflict in Egypt between Muslim radicals and the authorities has resulted in fewer than 500 deaths since 1992. Most were police or Muslim militants.

Even in the Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the total death toll in nearly six years of violence was around 1,000.

Almost every western country has warned its nationals not to go to Algeria, from which thousands of foreigners have fled and at least 69 murdered since September last year. The last to die was a Frenchman whose body was found on Saturday.

Neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco, alert for any Islamist discontent in their own countries, also keep a wary eye on Algeria where fundamentalist victory could provide a springboard and base for any of their own disaffected citizens.

Amnesty International last month reported hundreds of extra-judicial killings and says torture is now widespread in the detention centres of Algerian police and the para-military gendarmes.

Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, the fourth head of state in three years, tried to talk with his fundamentalist opponents.

On Sept. 13 he ordered FIS leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj moved from prison, where they were serving 12 years, to house arrest in a luxury residence where top officials had lived.

In return, Mr. Belhadj called his militants to increase their battle to overthrow the authorities.

Algeria's El Watan newspaper, well-informed on security matters and whose editor Omar Belbouche narrowly escaped death in an ambush last year, said on Saturday that Mr. Madani and Mr. Belhadj had been returned to Bldja military jail, 50 km south of the capital.

For many watching the Algerian crisis, such a report in any of the country's constrained newspapers, signalled unmistakably that Mr. Zeroual's efforts to negotiate were over — either voluntarily or with his hand being forced by army hardliners.

In a further signal, his spokesman Mibonh Mibonhi said on Algerian Television that Mr. Zeroual's pledge that presidential elections would be held by the end of 1995 — a year early — was backed by "guarantees".

Apparently crushing Islamists' hopes that the FIS might be legalised, he said: "The law on (political) parties opened the way to exploitation of the values of religion... It is inconceivable we should leave the way free to these practices which have dragged the country to deviation."

Despite the constitution banning parties based on religion, the FIS was legalised in reforms ending a one-party state after riots in October 1988. It swept to a landslide first round lead in the first multi-party general election in December 1991.

Less than a month later, the authorities scrapped the poll, spawning a host of Islamist guerrilla cells such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the Armed Islamic Movement (MA), the Army of the Islamic State (AEI) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS).

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King stresses need for peace

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Also on Monday, Mr. Lanxade was received by Gen. Mirai at the Armed Forces General Headquarters.

Gen. Mirai briefed the French official on the situation in the region, Jordan's strategic importance and the

role shouldered by the Armed Forces in protecting the Kingdom and participation in the peacekeeping operations in various parts of the world.

Adm. Lanxade and his wife arrived in Amman Sunday on a several-day visit to Jordan.

Arabs and Israelis meet

(Continued from page 1)

regional water databank, desalination plants and waste water treatment facilities, officials said.

"We are now in the third phase of the process, where we are focussing on practical matters and addressing real needs," said the group's chairman, Richard LeBaron, director of the office of regional affairs in the Near East Bureau of the U.S. State Department.

In the initial stages Arab and Israeli groups were brought together for the first time, attended seminars and began projects such as a desalination centre in Muscat,

be said.

About 160 officials from 45 delegations, including 13 Middle East parties, will take part in the three-day meeting. Syria and Lebanon are not participating.

Mr. LeBaron told reporters the meeting would examine issues like getting commitments for funding a regional databank to help countries make informed decisions and finding ways to bring the private sector into the process.

"The private-public partnership is crucial to the process right now," he said. "We want to demonstrate that peace has a meaning and that it will bring real benefits to the people in the region."

Syria may resume peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Sharaa flew back to Damascus after a working lunch with his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa.

Asked about Iraq's announcement that it was no longer at war with Israel, Mr. Sharaa said this was Iraq's affair and it did not put pressure on Syria to compromise.

"Syria is sticking to its position and to its just demands for achieving a just and comprehensive peace," he added.

Mr. Musa, told reporters it was strange for Iraq to change its attitude towards Israel before changing its attitude towards its Arab neighbour Kuwait.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz told the French monthly Le Monde Diplomatique that Iraq had no problems with Israel and was no longer at war with the Jewish state.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said in remarks broadcast on Monday that Israel would work with Arab states to bolster the Middle East economy without waiting for Syria to join in.

"We seriously want peace

with Syria. We think it is a need. It's inevitable for us and for the Syrians," Mr. Peres said.

"But for heavens sake we shall not wait for them," he said in the remarks to a Jerusalem business conference attended by more than 2,500 executives from around the world.

Mr. Peres said President Assad refused to follow the example of late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who made the first Arab-Israeli peace treaty.

"President Assad spent 17 years refusing to follow the example of Sadat. Should we all wait 17 years? What for?" Mr. Peres said.

"We have to go and move ahead. We don't have time because the money is running away, the desert is spreading," he said.

"The coming two years in the world will be apparently the best economic years that we have witnessed. We shouldn't lose the opportunity to attract investments to do business, we cannot wait. It's open to everybody but it depends on nobody, we have to move ahead full speed," Mr. Peres said.

Ibrahimi Mosque reopened

(Continued from page 1)

Muslims complained that during their afternoon prayers Jews shouted to disrupt them.

"Of course they disturbed me. Instead of reading from the Holy Koran I started to think of what would happen," said Adel Ibrahim, a 34-year-

old teacher. "When the massacre happened I was also praying."

A soldier inside the site said he was in charge of the Jewish section confirmed there had been an incident, but would not say what. Worshipers inside the Jewish hall also would not comment.

Hamis, Israel want dialogue

(Continued from page 1)

group into one that operates within the framework of the PLO's agreements with Israel.

The PNA has also been keen to get Hamas to gradually accept the status quo that has emerged since the setting up of the authority last July. But the PNA would prefer to remain, for the time being, the only channel for any negotiations with Hamas, and wants the movement to depend on the PNA for dealing with Israel.

But in practice, Hamas has already taken steps that indirectly accommodate the PNA — a creation of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements that the Islamic movement rejects.

In fact, the acts of violence or resistance that have boosted Hamas' standing among the Palestinians have deepened the group's need for authority.

For example, during the crisis that followed an Israeli soldier's kidnapping last month, Hamas dealt directly with the PNA as a major interlocutor and expressed its readiness to solve the issue and save the soldier's life.

The kidnapping episode, which ended with the killing of the soldier and three of his kidnappers as a result of an aborted Israeli attempt to save him, was a message to the Israelis that Hamas was seeking negotiations over an issue that the PNA has failed to deliver on — political prisoners.

The PNA was aware of the tactic but was more concerned at the time to prove to both Israel and Hamas that it remained the major channel for communication.

Later on, after the Oct. 1 Tel Aviv suicide blast,

Hamis' position relatively suffered as the group needed and publicly asked for protection from the PNA.

But even before the abduction and the Tel Aviv suicide attack, the PNA was able to reach two major understandings with Hamas. The first was an agreement to launch attacks against Israelis in the Gaza and Jericho areas — both on settlements and military posts. The second, reached after the abduction drama, was that Hamas will not claim any responsibility for military operations from Gaza.

Hamas has so far observed the two agreements and the movement's leadership was reportedly upset with its members who declared responsibility from the Tel Aviv attack from Gaza mosques.

"Any act that implies Hamas' acceptance of the authority is crucial to enhance the legitimacy of the PNA," says a senior Palestinian security officer. The Jerusalem Post reported on Sunday that Palestinian police were training Hamas and Islamic Jihad members on how to detonate bombs and booby traps. Although the report was not confirmed, the PNA has already promised Hamas and Islamic Jihad to protect its members from further Israeli attacks or assassination attempts in the aftermath of the Ayeed killing last week.

The question is how will the PNA be able to accommodate Hamas but assert itself as the only interlocutor. Analysts believe that the PNA has no choice but to accommodate Hamas because by not doing so it will even further undermine its standing among the Palestinians as well as Israelis.



Jordan is facing a rising demand for public sector health services

Jordan maps plans to expand health services

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Overall health services in Jordan are relatively better than many other countries with similar features, but the public sector role in the system needs modernising and upgrading, whether in terms of building new facilities or expanding present facilities to cope with the rising demand for health care.

In general terms, the overall health situation of the Jordanian population has improved considerably in the last 30 years. Life expectancy at birth has increased from 49 years to 68 years and infant mortality rate has fallen from 114 per 1,000 live births to 35.

The government acknowledges the shortage of nursing staff but says that otherwise the Kingdom has enough expertise available locally in the health sector. To address the shortfall in the nursing sector, it is calling for expanded training facilities in nursing and family health care.

The private sector plays a

prominent role in Jordan's health services, accounting for nearly 40 per cent of all first contacts in the primary care system and "a significant part of the specialised ambulatory care" and for over 25 per cent of all hospital beds available in the Kingdom.

In the public sector, the Ministry of Health and the Royal Medical Services are the main players. While the 20 Ministry of Health hospitals cater mainly to the poor and vulnerable groups in the country, the Royal Medical Services covers the military and police and their dependants.

The health sector in general contributes about four per cent of the gross domestic product and employs nearly 24,000 people.

The overall nursing training facilities, upgrading present hospitals and health centres and building new ones, and improving cooperation between the Ministry of Health and the Royal Medical Services as well as developing a new system of health financing and medical insurances.

In addition to the 20 Ministry of Health hospitals with an inpatient capacity of 2,036 beds and eight facilities managed by the Royal Medical Services, Jordan has 26 private sector hospitals.

The government implicitly concedes shortcomings in the public sector services. "Although the services offered by the Ministry of Health hospitals are usually acceptable, the quality of services at private sector hospitals is generally higher because of the majority of (government) hospitals are old and in need of repair and upgrading," says a recently drawn-up government document.

Specific proposals drawn up by the government involve the construction of a 640-bed hospital in the north, setting up new health centres in rural areas and upgrading all Ministry of Health hospitals.

Outlines of the proposed projects, estimated to cost around \$210 million, were presented to the recent Middle East and North Africa Economic Summit in

Casablanca.

The centre-piece of the proposed projects is the construction of and supply and installation of equipment at King Abdullah Hospital within the campus of the Jordan University for Science and Technology.

The 100,000-square metre, 16-storey hospital will serve not only as a hospital for residents of the Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun and Mafrqa governorates but also as a medical faculty of the university, which will manage the facility.

"The project is expected to increase the coverage ratio of hospital beds from 10 beds to 100,000 people to 16 beds per 100,000 and will be a substantial contribution to realising the objective of upgrading health services in the outlying regions to the level and standard prevailing in the urban areas of the Kingdom," said the Jordanian presentation at the Casablanca conference.

Besides enriching medical education by teaching and training, the hospital will be the first

modern hospital in the area and will provide medical services to about 1.2 million inhabitants in the north of Jordan," it said.

The project, estimated to cost \$110 million (\$80 million in foreign currency and the rest in local currency), will be completed in five years. Civil work on the hospital started early this year. Staff of the Jordan University of Science and Technology are preparing tender documents for the supply of equipment and furniture.

The second component of the proposals is upgrading of government hospitals, including maintenance and reequipping of about 16 — Amman's Al Bashir Hospital among them — and constructing and equipping a new 400-bed hospital in north Amman (Prince Hamzeh Hospital at a cost of \$50 million).

The process of upgrading four hospitals — Princess Basma Hospital in Irbid and others in Salt, Ma'an and Mafrqa — has already started. Overall cost of upgrading government hospital

is estimated to cost around \$20 million.

Jordan has nearly 215 village health centres, 274 primary health centres, 160 mother and child care centres, and 18 other facilities which offer normal primary health care services some limited in-patient capacities and specialised services on an as-needed basis.

The number of health care centres in Jordan in relation to population is high compared with other countries with similar features.

"Due to the growth of population, new centres are needed and some of the existing ones require upgrading and reequipping in order to provide sufficient facilities for primary health care, including immunisation, health education, environmental preservation and family health," says the government.

The upgrading and expansion of this area of the health sector is expected to cost around \$30 million and would take about 10 years starting in 1995.

Politicians hear the call prison cells slam shut

By Alan Elsner
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The U.S. prison population, already by far the highest of any industrial nation, is set to explode as politicians respond to strong public calls for harsher punishment of criminals.

Virtually every politician running for office in the Nov. 8 elections, whether on a local, statewide or federal level, promises to be tough on criminals.

Many are pledging to abolish parole and work release programmes, build new prisons, especially high security facilities, and speed up death penalty procedures.

Some, like Republican George Bush, running for governor of Texas, also favour opening boot camps for young offenders, using military barracks or tents as temporary prisons and punishing juveniles 16 years or younger as adults.

The few politicians still prepared to call themselves liberals are dismayed. Black leader Jesse Jackson last week bemoaned what he called the "sell-out" of his own Democratic Party, saying the 1994 campaign was "all about who can lock people up the longest and quickest and spend the most money doing it."

Many politicians' promises are made without telling voters how much their plans would cost. For example, when New York Republican George Pataki unveiled a four-point anti-crime programme earlier this month, he was unable to say how many offenders would be affected by his proposal to abolish parole or how expensive it would be.

"What he's doing is extending the so-called get-tough approach that has been tried in New York and virtually every other state in the past 20 years to use more imprisonment and more incarceration as a way to control crime," said Bob Gangi, head of the

Correctional Association of New York.

"It hasn't worked," he added.

According to Justice Department figures released last week, the U.S. state and federal prison population topped one million for the first time last June, a threefold increase over 1980.

In the first six months of this year the U.S. prison population grew by 1,500 a week. The United States had an incarceration rate more than four times that of Britain and 14 times that of Japan.

According to Justice Department figures released last week, the U.S. state and federal prison population topped one million for the first time last June, a threefold increase over 1980.

Yet crime rates have hardly shifted in recent years, according to FBI figures. If there has been any decline, it is only slight and people do not feel safer.

Partly, this is because television provides the public with a constant diet of horrific stories of murders, kidnappings and rapes — many of them incomprehensible acts of violence committed with no apparent motive.

But terrible things do happen in America today — mass murders on commuter trains, shooting sprees in shopping malls, gunmen running amok in offices and shopping malls.

an 11-year-old child killing another child and then being executed gangland-style.

Recently, the nation was transfixed by the drama of three-year-old Michael Smith and his 14-month-old brother, Alexander, innocent victims of a car theft. They were sitting in the back seat of a car when a man forced their mother out of the vehicle and drove off with the children.

No place seems safe. Last year, 750 workplace homicides were reported and there have been 34 killings in post offices in the past decade.

Several states are already building new prisons at a dizzy pace. In Texas, officials estimate that one of every nine adult black males will be behind bars by the year 2000.

In the state of Virginia, Governor George Allen is implementing a plan of major prison construction. The state needs the space because Mr. Allen has pledged to abolish parole, redesign sentences so that murderers, rapists and robbers spend seven times longer behind bars than they do now and ensure that criminals serve at least 85 per cent of their sentences.

Mr. Allen has wide backing. The chances of a Virginian becoming a victim of violent crime were one in 342 in 1983. In 1993, that figure had risen to one in 265 and it was three times higher for residents of metropolitan areas.

Backers of harsh measures say they are the only answer.

"A large number of violent crimes are committed by repeat offenders out on parole or while awaiting trial," wrote Arnold Reichman, a research fellow at the conservative Hoover Institution, in a Washington Times article.

"In order to ease the burdens on inner-city communities, a policy of longer prison terms for such violent and career criminals should be adopted. And if that means more prisons, so be it," he said.

Weary Sri Lanka faces gloomy future

By Feizal Samath
Reuters

COLOMBO — For Sri Lankans weary of a decade of violence in which thousands of people have died, a new government in August raised hopes of peace and stability.

But the latest political killing — a bomb blast last week that killed the nation's opposition leader and 53 others — has turned back the clock, threatening yet more uncertainty.

Gamini Dissanayake, presidential candidate of the United National Party (UNP), was killed by a suspected Tamil rebel suicide bomber at a political rally on Oct. 23.

"The public level of tolerance has reached frustrating levels and people are exhausted by the violence," said one academic and political observer who declined to be named.

He said that if Tamil rebels were shown to have been involved in the blast, the government would be under pressure to call off peace talks with them and revert to military action.

The rebels have denied accusations by Mr. Dissanayake's family that they were responsible. Official investigations have yet to identify a culprit.

"If it is proved that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had something to do with the assassination, we will have to reconsider other options," Prime Minister Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga told reporters.

Mr. Dissanayake's widow, Srma, is the UNP's new candidate for the Nov. 9 poll. She will stand against Ms. Kumaratunga, who is said to be certain of winning despite sympathy for the new candidate.

Since ousting the UNP at the August general election after 17 years in power, the New People's Alliance (NPA) government has sought to end the violence that has dogged Sri Lanka.

About 30,000 people have died since 1983 in the

Tamil rebels' campaign for a separate state for the 2.5 million Tamil minority community.

Many others were killed between 1988 and 1990 when left-wing rebels belonging to the country's main Sinhalese community tried to oust the government.

Ms. Kumaratunga is keen to end the Tamil insurgency quickly.

She eased a four-year-old economic embargo on the Tamil-rebel dominated north and sent a four-member government delegation, packed with loyalists, to the Jaffna peninsula for peace talks.

Since ousting the UNP at the August general election after 17 years in power, the New People's Alliance (NPA) government has sought to end the violence that has dogged Sri Lanka.

Her negotiators cancelled a second round, to have begun last Monday, after Mr. Dissanayake's assassination.

Ms. Kumaratunga said the events of the past week showed that political terror had sadly not ended.

But support for the LTTE's armed struggle, even from the 800,000 Tamils living in the rebel-dominated north, is waning. This year, the rebels altered their demand for an independent homeland and said they would consider an administrative unit with limited control from the central government.

"When the war began, many people earnestly sup-

ported the rebels but the fighting has dragged on for years and people are tired of it. We want peace," a Jaffna Tamil resident said.

Civilians suffer most when government planes bomb the north, hitting homes more often than the intended rebel targets, causing bitterness against the government.

Many people elsewhere in the country, including Tamils, are also tired of the violence and believe the peace process should continue, despite mounting anger against the Tigers, who they blame for the latest attack.

"We should get the people of Jaffna on our side and then hope they would bring some pressure on the Tigers to be serious about talks," a Sinhalese government worker said.

The rebels could have been provoked by the warm welcome extended by Jaffna residents this month to government negotiators and by Ms. Kumaratunga's remarks, in a recent interview, implying she might negotiate with Tamil people directly if the talks failed.

"The Tigers fear their popularity is falling after the new government's peace effort. This (attack) could be a message to the PA not to go over their heads," a political analyst said.

"They (rebels) feel the government won't call off the talks."

Pro-peace politicians say the government must not give up its search for an end to the Tamil problem despite opposition from Sinhalese hardliners opposed to talks.

"The need for peace is greater than the issue of accountability of those behind the cowardly and dastardly acts," said Neelan Tiruchelvam, a moderate Tamil parliamentarian.

The violence has deterred tourism and foreign investment, but only sporadically, and the resilient Sri Lankan economy continues to grow unhindered.

projects



Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date: 11/7/94	Tokyo Close Date: 11/7/94
Sterling Pound	1.6160	1.6164
Deutsche Mark	1.5140	1.5133
Swiss Franc	1.2673	1.2658
French Franc	5.1915	5.1900**
Japanese Yen	97.35	97.31
European Currency Unit	1.2563	1.2554**

* USD Per ECU
** European Operating in ECU (E.C.U.)

Source: Jordan Times

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.93	5.56	5.87	6.25
Sterling Pound	5.56	5.61	6.25	6.93
Deutsche Mark	4.75	4.93	5.06	5.43
Swiss Franc	5.56	3.75	3.93	4.37
French Franc	5.31	5.50	5.68	6.18
Japanese Yen	2.12	2.18	2.31	2.62
European Currency Unit	5.69	5.97	6.21	6.76

Interbank bid rates for deposits involving 1 U.S. Dollar, 1,000,000 or equivalent

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 7/11/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940
Sterling Pound	1.1174	1.1230
Deutsche Mark	0.4568	0.4591
Swiss Franc	0.5461	0.5486
French Franc	0.1532	0.1539
Japanese Yen	0.7102	0.7138
Dutch Guilder	0.4076	0.4096
Swedish Krona	0.0445	0.0447
Italian Lira	0.0445	0.0447
Belgian Franc	0.0445	0.0447

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 7/11/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
Baharal Dinar	1.5210	1.5410
Lebanese Lira	0.041025	0.042560
Saudi Riyal	0.1837	0.1855
Kuwait Dinar	2.3100	2.3700
Qatari Riyal	0.1686	0.1694
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.7640	1.8120
UAE Dirham	0.1878	0.1895
Greek Drachma	0.2665	0.3150
Cypriot Pound	1.4735	1.5315

* Per 100

Japan demand for foreign cars seen staying strong

TOKYO (R) — The strong yen and aggressive price-cutting are fuelling a boom in Japanese demand for foreign cars after a big jump in imports in October, industry sources said Monday.

They were speaking after the Japan Automobile Importers Association (JAIA) disclosed that sales of imported vehicles in Japan jumped 61.7 per cent from a year earlier to 21,705 in October, making the 12th straight month of rises.

This was a record high for the month of October, surpassing the previous record of 16,755 marked in October 1990.

Analysts at major research institutes said sales of imported vehicles in Japan would hit 300,000 in 1994, surpassing the previous record of 221,706 in 1990.

Imported vehicle sales will reach 300,000 this year, including 260,000-270,000 passenger cars, said JAIA planning manager Ken Kano.

"A shift in demand from Japanese cars to foreign cars is happening rapidly because of cuts in foreign cars' Japanese retail prices, increases in sales outlet numbers, and low-interest loan campaigns. Sales will continue rising, particularly in December, due to year-end factors in corporate orders," Mr. Kano said.

Traditionally, large corporate orders can be expected at the calendar year-end as well as the fiscal year-end in March, as companies try to use up their budgets.

Japanese sales of foreign cars will continue posting year-on-year gains in November and December, said spokesman for Japanese and foreign carmakers here.

Foreign carmakers are expected to launch their 1995 models here by mid-November with lower retail prices, taking advantage of the strong yen, Mr. Kano said.

Several foreign makers are

offering low interest rates for customers who buy their cars during a limited period. For those who buy between Nov. 1 and Dec. 31, Rover Japan Ltd. will offer a 1.9 per cent loan rate and BMW Japan Corp 3.9 per cent. Average rates on loans for foreign cars are about 6.5 per cent, compared with about 13.5 for Japanese car dealers.

Elsewhere, the duo sales network for Volkswagen A.G. and Audi cars will add

nine outlets, bringing the total to 100 by the end of 1994, compared with 56 as of November 1993.

Honda Motor Co. Ltd's U.S.-made cars topped the October imports list with 4,368, jumping 166.8 per cent from a year earlier. This was followed by BMW with 2,076, up 67.4 per cent, Volkswagen 2,006, up 51.5 per cent, Mercedes-Benz 2,441, up 28.1 per cent, and Rover with 1,327, up 24 per cent.

October sales of Ford Motor Co.'s cars rose 169.7 per cent from a year earlier to 936 and sales of its German-made Mondeo totalled 195 in October against nil a year earlier, JAIA said.

Ford Japan, which launched the Mondeo in June with a monthly sales target of 400, now has backlog orders for about two to three months, a company spokesman said.

Ford Japan plans to raise its sales projection drastically in 1995 even as it faces a supply shortage caused by very strong Japanese demand, the spokesman said.

Chrysler Corp's sales totalled 652 in October, up 18.3 per cent from a year earlier, although Chrysler had posted sales of more than 1,000 every month since February 1994. The lower sales were attributed to switches to 1995 models.

Canada and China sign agreements

BEIJING (R) — Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, forging stronger trade ties with China, signed nuclear and aid agreements Monday and met his Chinese counterpart Li Peng, Canadian officials said.

One agreement was for bilateral nuclear cooperation and the other covered Canadian funding for six development projects in China, they said.

Canada hopes to sell four heavy-water nuclear reactors in a deal that could be worth up to \$3.7 billion and help ease the country's serious power shortage. No further details on the agreements were given.

Mr. Chretien arrived in

Beijing Saturday leading the largest ever Canadian trade mission. He is accompanied by nine provincial premiers and executives from 250 companies.

After two days of touring, Mr. Chretien began his schedule in earnest Monday, signing the two deals and meeting Premier Li.

Like most visiting foreign leaders, Mr. Chretien came looking for business in one of the world's most promising markets and was expected to witness the signing of 60 to 70 major trade deals during his six days in China.

Chinese customs figures show that in the first nine months of 1994 Canada exported to China goods worth

\$1.089 billion, an increase of 3.8 per cent over the same period in 1993, and imported \$959 million in goods from China, up 12.5 per cent.

China is Canada's fifth largest export market and Canada is Beijing's 13th largest market, Chinese figures show.

The figures also show that since the grain trade began in 1960s, China has imported more than 100 million tonnes of Canadian wheat and has also become an important market for Canadian fertiliser, telecommunications, power and petrochemicals.

China's exports to Canada include textiles, shoes, toys,

electrical appliances and plastic products.

Figures from China's foreign trade ministry show that at the end of 1993, Canadian firms had invested in 1,540 projects, with a contract value of \$1.8 billion and actual investment of \$260 million.

The ministry said only two of the projects involve investment of more than \$10 million and that Canada lags far behind other Western investors.

It also said that Chinese investment in Canada totals \$378 million, including a major pulp mill invested in by China International Trust and Investment Co. or CITIC.

Seoul announces lifting of ban on North-South Korea direct trade

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea Monday said it would gradually lift a ban on economic exchanges with North Korea in a major gesture towards reunification of the peninsula.

President Kim Young-Sam made the announcement at a meeting of business leaders here, in which he also said the two Koreas should cooperate with each other to become a key player in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Now is the time for us to seriously consider and proceed with economic cooperation between the North and South," Mr. Kim told the

meeting. "I will take gradual steps to activate inter-Korean economic cooperation projects, including the permission to allow our businessmen to visit North Korea," he said.

The announcement came after the North said last week that it had started implementing a landmark accord reached in Geneva last month to freeze its suspect nuclear programme.

Mr. Kim said inter-Korean ties had been fettered by the nuclear issue and had undergone difficult phases in the past.

But he expressed the hope

that the two Koreas could engage in concrete projects starting from next year, the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Korean peninsula from Japanese colonial rule.

"Korea, with the North and South cooperating with each other, will become a key player doing a leading role in the Asia-Pacific era," he said.

He also urged North Korea to join the regional and international community, promising that South Korea will strongly support the North's entry into the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

(APEC) forum.

Saying that inter-Korean ties from now on must be based on substantial and cooperative relations, Mr. Kim offered to hold government-level talks to work out the framework for economic cooperation.

Mr. Kim said economic cooperation could lead to the reunification of the peninsula.

But he stressed that transparency of the North's nuclear programme must be secured for peace to take root on the Korean peninsula, urging the North to carry out the Geneva accord faithfully.

"Inter-Korean ties must enter into an era of reconciliation and cooperation in tandem with the current of world history," Mr. Kim said.

"I hope that North Korea, with the replacement of its leadership, joins this current with stability," he said.

Plague has cost India \$600m of lost exports

NEW DELHI (R) — The outbreak of plague has cost India far less in lost exports than had been feared, Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee was quoted Monday as saying.

Mr. Mukherjee told the Press Trust of India (PTI) in an interview that trade lost to an outbreak of the disease totalled \$600 million in October, well below the \$1 billion projection he made late last month.

The minister was quoted as saying he expected exports to increase by about 15 per cent to \$25.5 billion in the 1994/95 financial year ending on March 31, from \$22.17 billion the previous financial year.

That would be slower growth than in 1993/94 when overseas sales surged 20.4 per cent but faster than some private projections.

Many countries slapped stiff restrictions on trade with India after pneumonic plague broke out in the city of Surat in western Gujarat state in late September. The disease claimed 54 of its 57 victims in Gujarat.

India has since been declared plague-free and most trade and travel curbs have been lifted.

The news agency quoted Mr. Mukherjee as saying foreign trade data for September reflected on adverse impact from plague.

Indian merchandise exports rose 12.3 per cent to \$11.62 billion between April and September, according to a commerce ministry statement released last week which showed strong trade growth in August and September.

The statement said the adverse impact of an outbreak of plague on exports could be contained in coming weeks.

Surat is India's diamond trade capital and gems and jewellery from the region are important export items.

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1st Division Basketball Championship

Jazireh, Watani score crucial wins; Ahli add another big victory

By Aileen Baannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ambitions and capabilities of most teams became evident in the second week of the 1st Division Basketball Championship, except for former champions Al Orthodoxy who have yet to play.

In the latest matches, Al Watani scored a convincing 74-49 win over Homentmen; Al Ahli defeated Al Hussein 119-54 while Al Jazireh scored a crucial 73-69 victory over Al Jalil.

Although it is yet very early to predict final standings, Al Jazireh's win somewhat gave a signal to Al Jalil's camp to limit their ambitions to third or fourth place.

Judging by their results so far, Al Jazireh who finished third last year, seem to be capable of being the team that will challenge Al Orthodoxy for second place for the first time in decades.

Al Ahli's win over Hussein was expected. Al Hussein had finished sixth last season and they will have to improve that standing by overcoming at least two teams to avoid relegation.

However, their score against the titleholders demonstrated that they are not an easy team to beat and have a valid chance of defeating Al Watani and Homentmen to stay among the prestigious group.

Al Watani's win over Homentmen was no big surprise. Al Watani entered the competition well-prepared and their new head coach vowed that his team would play for an

advanced standing this year.

However, Al Watani's form showed that they are in no shape to stage a big surprise and advance their standing. Moreover, the results of Al Jalil and Al Hussein against Al Jazireh and Al Ahli gave an early signal that tough matches lie ahead and Al Watani may find themselves fighting to avoid relegation.

Al Watani led throughout their match against Homentmen, attended by a good crowd despite the rain and cold weather.

Both teams delighted their fans with over 12 three-pointers. Scoring remained close during the first half in which Al Watani's Hani Al Taher excelled and scored most for his team together with Fadi Al Hussein.

Vicken Avakian narrowed Al Watani's 15-8 lead to 15-12 by rebounding and scoring for his team as teammate Mohammad Qardan was burdened by three personal fouls early in the match.

However, Al Watani managed to build a strong lead by scoring 10 consecutive points taking advantage of their opponents' slower movement and many fouls.

A three-pointer by Homentmen's Vazken Ajemian and aggressive play by Avakian narrowed the gap, ending the first half 36-28 for Al Watani.

Both teams gave bench players a chance, especially after Homentmen's coach gave up early and allowed under-18 players a chance to test their skill. However that proved to be costly as Avakian was the only one with accurate finishes and scored 11 consecutive points while Al Watani hammered Homentmen's net with fast breaks and took advantage of many loose balls to take a commanding 60-40 lead.

Homentmen's star centre Ala' Abu Rahmeb scored only two points as Watani's Faris Dahabreh, Nadim Nahhas and Taher continued to score ending the match 74-49.

Al Watani will next play Al Ahli, while Homentmen meet Al Jalil Thursday.

In another match, Al Jalil surprised Al Jazireh at the beginning of their match at Yarmouk University's court in Irbid, leading 11-3. However Al Jazireh soon equalised and took control of the match depending on their usual teamwork led by new recruit Naser Alawneh, Ghaith Ennabi and Sager Khirfan to win the first half 41-32.

Al Jalil applied full court defence at the beginning of the second half and managed to reduce the gap and take the lead again at 52-51.

However, Al Jazireh's own man-to-man defence led to many loose balls which they converted to easy fast breaks while hampering their opponents with many fouls, as Al Jazireh again took the lead and ended the match with a precious 73-69 win.

The other team from Irbid, Al Hussein, also gave Al Ahli a hard time as scoring remained close at the start of the first half.

Al Ahli's best players Samir Marqus, Marwan Ma'touq, Naser Bushnaq and Marwan Al Saedi faced a hard playing group including Hadi Al Sayes and Mustafa Al Kofabi. However, the titleholders had no problem winning the first half 65-37.

Yousef Zaghloul, Ramez Hammoudh, Zeid Alkhas and Sami Saddideen led Al Ahli in the second half as they went on to win the match 119-54.

STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts.
Ahli	2	2	—	254	80	4
Jazireh	2	2	—	164	137	4
Watani	2	1	1	142	140	3
Homentmen	2	2	2	75	209	2
Jalil	1	—	1	69	73	1
Hussein	1	—	1	54	119	1
Orthodoxy	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Orthodoxy-Hussein have a postponed match.

Arab clubs advance in African soccer finals

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Clubs from Arabic-speaking Africa ensured their continued dominance of Africa's top club competition with semifinal victories at the weekend.

Holders Zamalek of Egypt and Tunisian club Esperance qualified for the final of the African Champions Cup with aggregate wins in their respective semifinal ties.

Zamalek lost and Esperance drew in their second leg matches on the weekend, but the two sides will contest the two-legged final next month to stretch North Africa supremacy in the competition to 11 years.

It was in 1983 that a team from a country south of the Sahara last won the Champions Cup when Ghana's Ashanti Kotoko narrowly beat Al Ahly of Egypt in the final.

Since then the tournament has been won exclusively by clubs from Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

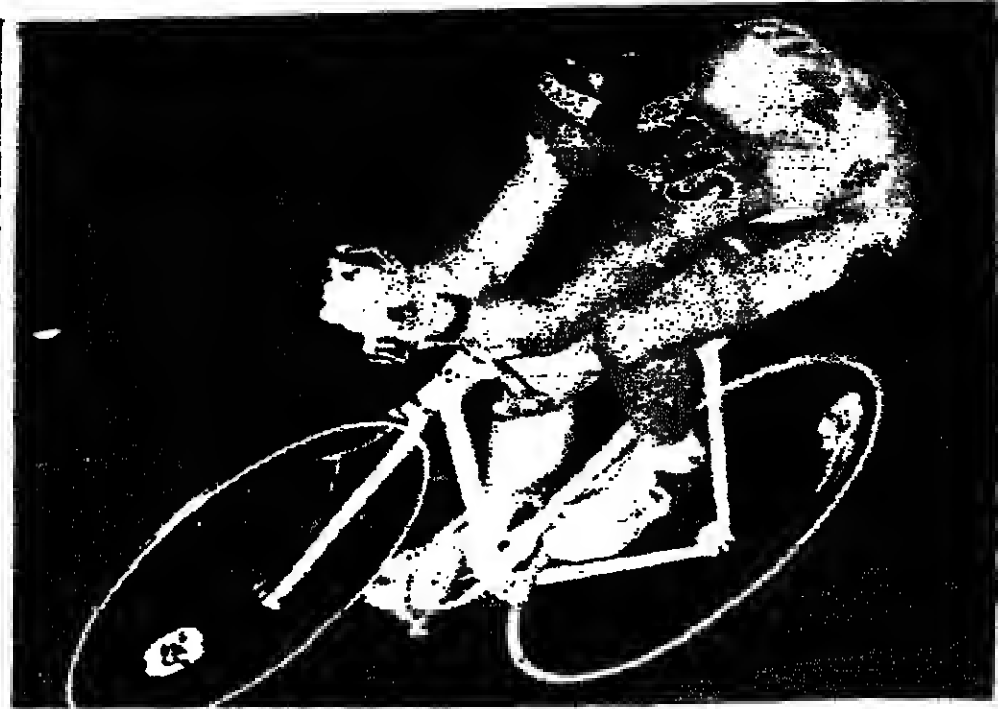
Zamalek won through 2-1 on aggregate despite a 1-0 second leg loss to Nkanga FC in Zambia Sunday.

The home team, perennial semifinalists in the Champions Cup, scored the game's only goal from the penalty spot, converted by 38-year-old veteran midfielder Beston Chambeshi in the 48th minute.

Esperance drew 2-2 away at Mouloudia Oran of Algeria to go through 5-3 on aggregate.

The Tunisians' goals were scored by Ayed Hamrouni and Zambian import Kenneth Malitoli.

Premiero Maio created history for Angola by becoming the first club from the war-ravaged country to reach the final of an African club competition.



Swiss cyclist Tony Rominger speeds to break his own world hour record (AFP photo).

Rominger's record may stand for years

BORDEAUX (R) — Cycling experts, fellow riders and former champions remain dazzled by Tony Rominger's one-hour world record of 55.291 kilometres.

"People used to say that Miguel Indurain came from another planet. If so, where does Rominger come from?" asked former road world champion Stephen Roche of Ireland, summing up the general feeling after Saturday's splendid ride.

By breaking the previously unthinkable 55-km barrier, beating Spanish ex-holder Indurain by more than two kms, Rominger achieved heights which his rivals may take years to reach.

The Swiss rider shattered his own record of 53.832 kms, set two weeks previously on the same track.

"I thought he would beat it but not that he would reach 55 kilometres. He was impressive throughout. When you see the times he set, you realise it was real clockwork," former holder Eddy Merckx of Belgium, arguably the best rider ever, said.

For most experts, Briton Chris Boardman, who briefly held the record last year on 52.270 kilometres, looks the best bet to go even further, with more experience and thanks to new technical improvements, Boardman, who is only 24, may beat it. Merckx, who covered 49.431 kms 22 years ago, added.

But for some, Rominger's feat was so extraordinary that it may deter rivals from

tackling it in the short term.

"There is a risk of the same situation as when Moser broke the 50-km barrier. We can ask ourselves if Rominger did not set the limit too high," Roche said.

Italy's Francesco Moser achieved 51.151 kms in 1984, albeit high altitude in Mexico. For nine years, no rider fancied a new bid until unheralded Scot Graeme Obree surprised everyone by covering 51.596 kms in Hamar, Norway, last year.

Rominger surprised himself by exceeding 55 kms and doubts he can go further than he did on Saturday. "I really suffered a lot today. I honestly don't think I could go any faster. I feel I've reached my limits," he said shortly after his monumental effort.

For team director Cyrille Guimard, who coached cycling greats such as Frenchmen Bernard Hinault and Laurent Fignon and American Greg Lemond, Rominger's record can now be beaten only at high altitude.

"At 54.5 kms it may have been legitimate to hope to beat it. Now you must think on a 56 kph basis and it seems impossible at sea level," he said.

Nobody even mentioned Indurain, four times winner of the Tour de France, as a potential contender even though the Spaniard has regularly beaten Rominger in road time trials.

Indurain took the record on the same track in September with 53.040 kms but has now been thoroughly upstaged.

Telecommunications Corporation Announcement Regarding Tender No. 48/94 Local Line Plant

The Telecommunications Corporation hereby announces an amendment for the condition of participation in Tender No. 48/94, the condition shall be as follows:

The Tenderer should be a joint venture of at least two parties:

The first party should be one of the following:

- Local firm classified by the Ministry of Public Works and Housing as "First Class" in the field of "Buildings" or "Water and Sewerage." OR;
- Two local firms one of them classified as "First Class" in the field of "Electromechanical" and specialised in "Electricity" while the other should be classified as at least "Second Class" in the field of "Buildings" or "Water and Sewerage."

The second party should be an international firm specialised in management and installation of similar projects.

Eng. Waleed Dweik
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Dream victory eludes Navratilova in final

OAKLAND (R) — Arantxa Sanchez Vicario denied Martina Navratilova a dream victory at the \$400,000 Bank of the West classic Sunday, fighting back from the brink of defeat to win 1-6 7-6 (7-5) 7-6 (7-3).

Navratilova, in the second to last tournament of her 19-year career, played brilliantly in the first set and said later there were moments that reminded her of the form that brought her three of the four grand slam titles in 1984.

"At times I was saying to myself, 'oh my God, look at that shot I just hit. This is like 10 years ago,'" said Navratilova, who broke the top seed's serve three times in the 24-

minute first set.

World number two Sanchez, who also played a poor first set in her second-round victory against tour newcomer Venus Williams, can be a streak player, and although she trailed Navratilova 4-1 in the second set she was not worried.

Navratilova couldn't serve out the match at 5-4 in the second set, and mistakes at the net cost Navratilova in the second-set tiebreaker. At 6-5 in the tiebreak, Sanchez evened the match with a winning serve and volley combination.

The third set was a see-saw battle, as the players traded service breaks six times, the

most dramatic break came as Navratilova served for the match at 5-3. She double faulted away the first point, fell behind 15-40, and lost the opportunity when Sanchez Vicario hit a backhand winner.

Navratilova, 38, will play her last tournament at the Virginia Slims Championship in New York beginning November 14.

Maleeva beats Schultz
in final

In Quebec City, Canada, Katarina Maleeva of Bulgaria

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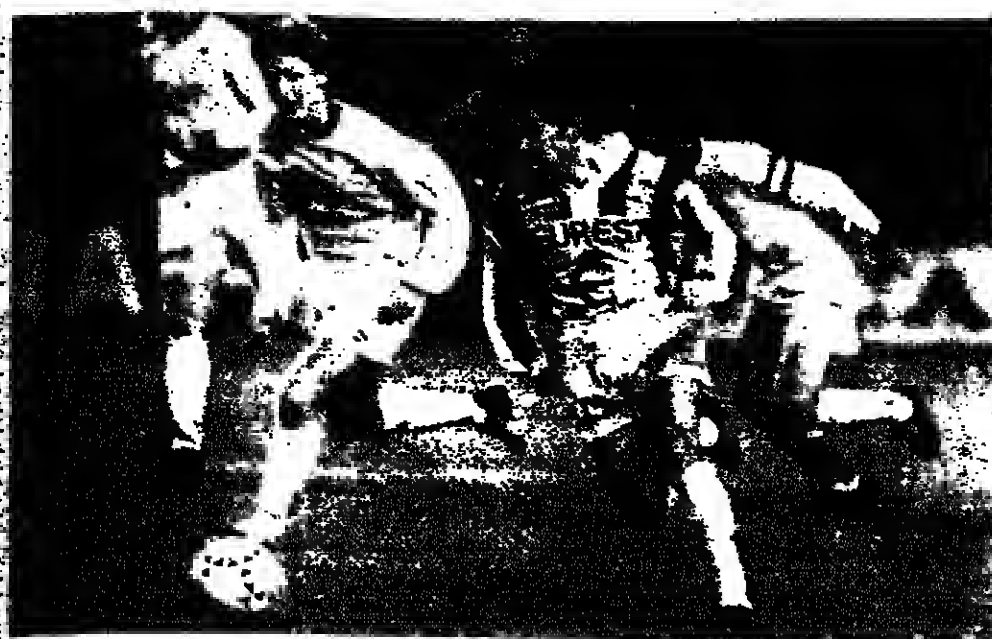
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Nantes' Raynald Pedros (right) charges into the Metz defence (AFP photo)

Real Madrid defeat Atletico; Nantes extend unbeaten run

PARIS (AFP) — Spain produced the fireworks this weekend when Real Madrid beat Atletico in an explosive derby match that saw six goals in the first half and a red card in the second.

Italy, in contrast, produced floods, lashing rain and a set of damp Serie A results while France's headlines focused on Parisian crowd trouble.

The only rival to the Spanish super side came from Germany, where Bundesliga

leaders Borussia Dortmund saw off major rivals Werder Bremen 2-0.

Real's home win consolidated their position in third behind Deportivo La Coruna, who went top on 16 points with a 3-1 win over Real Sociedad, while Zaragoza, on 15, were held 0-0 at Logrono.

Yet Real were surprised by a lively Atletico Madrid side performing way above its league standing — they are now just one off the bottom.

The away side, fresh from a defeat by Betis Sevilla and the departure of Colombian coach Francisco Maturana, were soon 2-0 behind after a controversial penalty by Michel on 21 minutes and a header four minutes later from Chilean Ivan Zamorano.

But Atletico, who have now won just twice in ten league outings, responded immediately as Pole Roman Kosecki bit back from a mis-clearance.

Real quashed that fight-back through a Raul Gonzalez left-foot strike and Zamorano's second — his tenth goal in ten matches — to make it 4-1 but Argentine Diego Simeone reduced the arrears again with a penalty in injury time.

The home side, however, took over in the second period when Atletico forward Francisco Kiko was sent off for a second booking after 51 minutes.

In Italy, Juventus failed to get on the pitch against Torino after torrential rains sweeping northwestern Italy

forced the police to be redirected to flood duty.

The rest of the Serie A contenders served up a disappointing set of results.

Parma stayed two points clear on 20 points after a rain-soaked 1-1 draw at AC Milan courtesy of a Massimo Crippa crisply-driven 75th minute equaliser. Over 50,000 fans braved the downpours to watch the match.

Lazio, in second, could do no better by drawing 0-0 at Reggina while AS Roma, who had been fourth, were held 1-1 at home by Napoli.

Only Fiorentina made ground, a 2-0 victory over Bari shifting them into third, on 18 alongside Lazio.

While Borussia shone in Germany, Steffen Freund setting them on the way to 20 points, three ahead of Werder, Hamburg were the major losers, losing at home to Bayer Leverkusen and spiralling from third to seventh.

Hamburg opened the scoring through Jorge Albertz after 12 minutes but two second-half goals, the first from former Barcelona playmaker Bernd Schuster, gave the visitors the points.

Borussia Moenchengladbach moved up to third on 16 points following their impressive 3-1 away win over Cologne. The teams reached half time level before Thomas Kastenmeier grabbed the lead after 54 minutes and Heiko Herrlich, signed from Bayer Leverkusen, sealed the points 13 minutes from time.

Agassi wins 24th title, moves to world No. 2

PARIS (Agencies) — Even after winning three tournaments in his last four, moving up to No. 2 in the world, and beating the No. 1 player, Andre Agassi feels there is still room for improvement in his tennis game.

"I got a lot of improving to do. I feel like there are certain points in my game that I can strongly improve. I feel like I am going to address that over this winter and come out even playing better," Agassi said after his 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5 victory over Marc Rosset in the Paris Open final Sunday.

The victory moved Agassi up from No. 7 to No. 2 in the tennis rankings, but he intends to get better.

"I really feel like my shots can become a lot stronger. I believe I can take more chances. I believe I can develop my serve to be a weapon to complement the rest of my game," Agassi said.

After winning the U.S. Open in September he has his sights set on the Australian Open in January.

"Tomorrow brings a new tournament and you've got to keep looking that way," said the reigning United States Open champion whose highest previous ranking was number three back in 1988.

"Otherwise one day you stop and realise that it has moved faster than you have."

"Being number one is something you can hopefully say one day 'I was number one for this long'. But the best thing is to win Grand Slam tournaments. That is what's most important to me."

"My next goal is the Australian Open. I have never played there and I am really looking forward to it. Next year I really want to win the Australian Open and the French Open," said Agassi, who also won Wimbledon in 1992.

"I've been a French Open finalist twice. Today I learned what it's like to win in Paris...and it was a great feeling."

Agassi paid a warm tribute



Andre Agassi returns a double-handed backhand during the final of the Paris Open (AFP photo)

to his coach Brad Gilbert.

"I was really amazed how well he knew my game when I first spoke to him about becoming my coach. He told me exactly what I needed to do to get back to where I could be."

Agassi admitted that he had learned much during his long injury lay-off before and after his wrist operation which kept him out of tennis from last autumn until this Spring and which saw his ranking slump out of the top-30.

"Being away I realised how much I loved the game, how much I missed the game, and how much I was committed to the game. At first my aim was just to break back into the top-25. When you've

been out that long it's impossible to make specific goals."

"The pain and hardship I went through definitely brought some good out in me and I am very proud of what I have accomplished."

"I've got a lot of improving to do. I feel I should be able to dictate play out there and that my shots could become a lot stronger. I believe I can take more chances and develop my serve into a weapon to complement the rest of my game. I can learn how to utilize coming in and cutting that ball a little more effectively."

His victim in the two and a half hour final inside the Bercy Stadium would probably

think Agassi is already doing all of those things pretty well — as does world number-one Pete Sampras who crashed out to his compatriot in the quarter-finals.

Admittedly Rosset, who towers 6ft 7in (2m01), was slow to find his mark in front of the noisy 12,000 spectators — but by the end of the afternoon he had earned their respect, slammed down 19 aces and matched the eighth-seeded American for much of the third and fourth sets.

By taking the title, Agassi, who has already qualified for next month's ATP world championship finals in Frankfurt, avenged two consecu-

tive defeats inflicted by the Swiss fourteenth seed. "And he also wiped out the bitter memory of being jeered off the same court in his only other appearance in the event two years ago. On that occasion he won only three games against the man who went on to become his coach."

Agassi, who came out dressed in a blue and white jersey-style shirt and wearing a different coloured sock on each foot, got off to an excellent start. He served and hit Rosset with blistering charges of pace and by keeping the ball away from the Swiss player's lethal forehand and the tactics put a rich dividend.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A TANNAN HITCH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠AK7 ♠KQ983 ♠4 ♠AK5
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A—Slam must be a good bet—if partner has a diamond control among the assets. Blackwood won't help here, since if partner shows one ace, you won't know in which suit it is. To unlock the potential of the hand start a cue-bidding sequence with three spades.

Q2—At South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠AK5 ♠K5 ♠AKJ9762
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?
A—You have a minimum in the way of high cards for your initial action and a raise of a one club opening bid suggests major support. Thus, you don't have enough for game, but there's still an obligation to get to the best spot. Since the hand is unbalanced, retreat to three clubs.

Q3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K104 ♠8 ♠K82 ♠87632
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?
A—You have a minimum in the way of high cards for your initial action and a raise of a one club opening bid suggests major support. Thus, you don't have enough for game, but there's still an obligation to get to the best spot. Since the hand is unbalanced, retreat to three clubs.

Q4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠K7 ♠93 ♠AK1092 ♠Q7652
Partner opens the bidding with one club. What do you respond?
A—If you raised to two clubs with the previous holding, you can't make the same bid with this hand. Start by responding one diamond, then support clubs at your next turn. That implies a better holding than a direct raise. If you play limit raises, this hand just about qualifies for an immediate jump to three clubs.

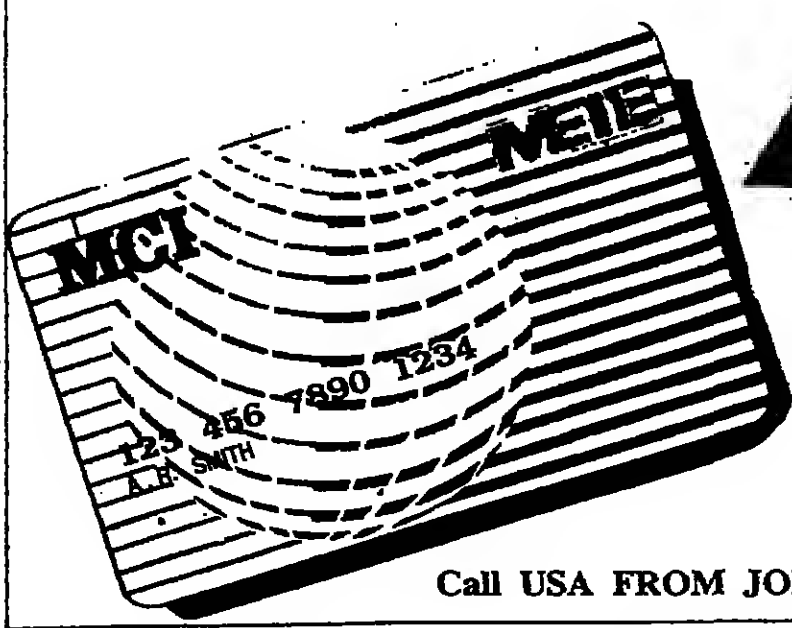
Q5—At South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠1072 ♠KQ95 ♠K7 ♠AQ6
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What do you bid now?
A—North's response asks you to show a four-card major, if you have one. Most play that with both you show spades first. Some prefer hearts first. Others bid their stronger major. With this holding, partnership agreements are moot—if you don't immediately connect in one major, you have the spade suit in all values to contract for game in the other.

Q6—At South, vulnerable, you hold:
♠863 ♠1062 ♠Q85 ♠AK7
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?
A—Any four-card major suit is bidable by responder. However, with your six high-card points, that hand and shabby major, we would get to suppress the spade suit in favor of the discouraging and more descriptive one-no-trump response.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30					

Iran, Iraq trade charges after attack on rebel base

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ'S senior diplomat in Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry Monday to hear a protest over Baghdad's backing for the Iraq-based Mujahadeen-e-Khalq opposition group, Tehran Radio reported.

The broadcast made no mention of Mujahadeen claims that Iranian troops fired four missiles at a major rebel base in Iraq early Sunday.

It also did not cite a report by Iran's state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) which said Iranian forces chased fleeing raiders across the border and attacked another rebel base.

The radio said Raji Al-Sadoun, the Iraqi charge d'affaires in Tehran, was informed of Iran's "strong protest and dissatisfaction" over Baghdad's support for the Mujahadeen.

Hossein Sadeqi, director general of the ministry's Gulf section, informed Mr. Sadoun that the rebels intended to sabotage oil installations near the border with Iraq and warned against "any kind of similar moves and operations," the radio reported.

Also Monday, Iraq's Al-Thawra daily, mouthpiece of the ruling Baath Party, said the alleged Iranian missile attack was "a dastardly action that exposes Iran's designs of aggression and its

uneasing attempts to fabricate problems to destabilise the region."

The Iraqi News Agency said the paper reiterated Sunday's Foreign Ministry statement, warning that Baghdad reserved the right "to respond to this wanton aggression with the proper means and at the appropriate time."

The Iranian news agency claimed Sunday that Iranian troops had captured a Mujahadeen raider, identified as Mojtaba Oveis, who had admitted that he and other mujahadeen commanders intended to blast economic installations, oil pipelines and oil wells in Iran.

The Mujahadeen denied those accusations, saying they knew no person by that name.

The group claimed two Iranian Scud-B missiles hit its main Ashraf military base, more than 80 kilometres inside the Iraqi border. Two other Scuds missed, landing just outside the base.

A Mujahadeen spokesman said there were no casualties. IRNA reported "at least eight explosions" in Ashraf, but made no mention of missiles. It said there were "heavy casualties."

The agency said Iranian border guards had pursued Mujahadeen raiders into Iraq after a frontier shootout in which two infiltrators were killed and two border guards wounded, one critically.

The guards pursued the fleeing survivors into Iraq and attacked a Mujahadeen base in the "Abu Ghuraib region" near Baghdad early Sunday, IRNA said.

Iranian forces have launched several attacks on Mujahadeen bases in Iraq over the past two years.

Iran and Iraq fought a 1980-88 war. Despite the six-year-old ceasefire, they still have not signed a formal peace treaty.

Tehran has repeatedly accused Baghdad of supporting the Mujahadeen, which is accused in Iran of most attacks inside Iran including a blast at a holy shrine in June which left 24 dead and dozens injured. Mujahadeen denied the charges.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has postponed a visit to Iraq several times in the past year. The visit was aimed at normalising relations between the two neighbours.

In a statement issued in Paris and sent to Reuters, the Mujahadeen said its leader Massoud Rajavi sent messages to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Gbali and the Security Council urging them to condemn the attack on the Ashraf base.

The statement said Mr. Rajavi urged the Security Council "to impose practical and specific punishments against" Iran.



King opens sports complex

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Monday inaugurates the sports complex of the Amman Baccalaureate School in Amman.

Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, the chairperson of the school's board of trustees delivered an address outlining the objectives of the project.

The Baccalaureate School has always sought

to blend scientific education with culture and has been striving to offer the best education and training to its students, the Princess said. She said that the school has sought to make available the best possible sports facilities as it continues to ensure sound minds in sound bodies.

Jordanians in UAE applaud peace treaty, pledge support

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday received at the Royal Court a delegation representing the Jordanian community in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The King expressed joy over having the chance to meet the delegation and stressed the need for Jordanians living abroad to convey the best image about their homeland.

Delegation head Mohammad Khazari Al Deeb delivered an address at the meeting paying tribute to the King and his strenuous efforts over the past decades to preserve the rights of the Jordanian and Arab people.

"Your Majesty's continuous keenness and strenuous efforts over decades to protect the land and the holy places and the national rights of the loyal Jordanian people and the Arab peoples are always a source of pride for us," Mr. Deeb told the King at the meeting, which was attended by the King's advisors and Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Ben Zeid. Mr. Deeb congratulated the King on the signing of the

Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, describing it as an honourable achievement "which we and the coming generations will accept as a present from Your Majesty to our dear Jordan."

He said the treaty was based on the principle of justice and stressed Jordan's sovereign rights over its land and water, and it would certainly lead to a peace that would benefit the peoples of the region.

Mr. Deeb also highlighted Jordan's democratisation process, stressing that it was meant to protect Jordanian people's rights and preserve public freedoms.

He thanked UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayen over the hospitality Jordanians are accorded in the Gulf state. The delegation members were also received by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali at the Prime Ministry. Mr. Deeb expressed to Dr. Majali the readiness of the Jordanian community in the UAE to exert every possible effort to support the peace process.

Dr. Majali thanked the delegation members for their sense of true belonging and

support for the peace process.

The prime minister outlined to the delegation Jordan's principled stands which governed its negotiations with Israel aimed at restoring the Kingdom's water and land rights.

He explained Jordan's position on the issue of refugees and the displaced. Jordan, Dr. Majali said, fully supports the displaced and the refugees in their quest to regain their rights in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

He said negotiations at the Jordanian-Israeli track of the Middle East peace process were different from other tracks because of the nature of issues listed on the negotiations agenda such as water, borders, refugees and displaced persons.

He said Jordan had always been ready to coordinate with other Arab countries and was always keen to maintain this coordination even at the minimum levels.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Deeb presented Dr. Majali with a shield in the name of the Jordanian community in the UAE.

King pledges to help Yemen

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday promised to provide Yemen with Jordanian expertise to help with the country's development and overcome the consequences of the recent civil war.

The King made the pledge at a meeting held at the Royal Court with visiting Yemeni Minister of Social Affairs Mohammad Abdullah Al Batni, who was asked by the King to convey his greetings to Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and the Yemeni people.

Mr. Batni, who is on a week-long visit to Jordan to discuss cooperation in social affairs, expressed Yemen's congratulations to the King over the signing of the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty.

The minister also expressed Yemen's appreciation of Jordan's assistance to the Yemeni people.

Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour was present at the meeting.

Earlier Monday, the Yemeni official met Labour Minister Khaled Ghazawi, who presented an outline of the ministry's programmes. Mr. Ghazawi said Jordan was keen on pursuing coordinating and cooperation with Arab brothers in various fields and his office would be willing to offer Yemen help in labour-related matters and whatever expertise available to the Ministry of Labour concerning employment of guest workers, the labour market and the training of workforce among other matters.

Expressing appreciation of Jordan's stand in support for Yemen, Mr. Batni said Yemen wanted to benefit from Jordan's experience, particularly concerning dealings with guest workers of whom Yemen expects great numbers.

The two sides discussed means of coordinating cooperation in providing assistance in labour matters to Yemen.

The Yemeni minister also visited the Vocational Training Centre in Marka and met Dr. Ahmad Atwan, director general of the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC).

COLUMN

Victims of China stocks killer get awards, money

BEIJING (R) — The family of the first person killed in a stock brokerage robbery in China and the staff who caught the killer have been honoured with money and medals, the China Securities newspaper said Monday. An Gang, 31, who was executed after a brief trial, had confessed to carrying out the robbery at the brokerage in the northeast city of Shenyang on Oct. 24. The newspaper said the Shenyang City Government held a meeting Sunday to honour Liu Bosong, the armed policeman who chased Mr. An and subdued him with a baton, giving him a medal engraved "hero who catches the enemy." Mr. Liu and the family of the woman cashier shot dead by Mr. An both received cash payments of 10,000 yuan (\$1,176). Six other people who helped subdue Mr. An and three wounded staff received citations for bravery and payments of between 2,000 and 8,000 yuan (\$235 to \$941), it said. In addition, they also received free life and property insurance. The Shenzhen Securities Exchange also sent 30,000 yuan (\$3,500) to the Shenyang Brokerage to show its condolences, the newspaper said.

Austrian priests to flout Vatican over communion

VIENNA (AFP) — Regional church authorities in Austria, where four out of five residents are Catholics, vowed over the weekend to flout a Vatican ruling banning divorced people who remarry from receiving communion. Bishop Maximilian Aichern, who heads the diocese in Linz, said that the council of churches in western Austria decided Saturday that "no one wanting communion must be excluded" and "divorces who are remarried must also have access to communion." He said the council was "deeply shocked" by the Vatican's decision on communion, and several Austrian priests have vowed not to heed Pope John Paul II's call. The Pope, in a letter to bishops on Oct. 14, reaffirmed the church's directive banning divorced people who remarry from receiving communion. Austria has a high divorce rate, with one out of three marriages ending in divorce. In 1992, 16,000 couples divorced while 46,000 marriages were celebrated.

U.K. MP leaves wife after affair exposed

LONDON (AP) — A leading Conservative legislator announced plans to divorce his wife Sunday after a newspaper exposed his dalliance with a society woman. The announcement, potentially embarrassing to Prime Minister John Major's scandal-plagued Conservative Party, came the same day that a junior minister resigned in unclear circumstances. David Mellor, who was himself forced to resign from a ministerial post two years ago after an affair with a soft-porn film actress, said he and his wife were "going our separate ways" after the revelation of another extramarital relationship. Mr. Mellor's earlier liaison with actress Antonia De Sancta helped land Prime Minister John Major's Conservative Party in allegations it is mired in sleaze — a reputation Mr. Major is still struggling to shed, as a number of ministers were recently forced to resign over ethics charges. Mr. Mellor, 45, said in a statement that he was leaving wife Judith and would continue his relationship with Lady Penelope Cobham, 40. "It is true that Penny Cobham and I are extremely close and intend to remain so," said Mr. Mellor in a statement. The report in the Sunday Times of the World tabloid, with photos of worried-looking Cobham and Mellor arriving at her apartment for midday meetings, said the two began their relationship just after Mr. Mellor's affair with De Sancta. Cobham is herself married to a peer, Viscount John Cobham. She said her husband understood the situation. "There is a deep bond between myself and David Mellor which we intend to continue," she said in her own statement.

NEWS IN BRIEF

'One million Arabs to visit Holy Land'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — More than one million Arabs a year will tour the Holy Land once Israel and Syria make peace, the Palestinian minister for tourism predicts. "When Syria joins the club, we can expect to see over a million tourists from Arab countries," Elias Freij told the Jerusalem Business Conference. Some two million tourists now visit each year, according to Israeli statistics, and Mr. Freij, who is also mayor of the West Bank town of Bethlehem, said that figure could swell to five million. Mr. Freij called for a regional tourism agreement between the Palestinian National Authority, Jordan and Israel. But Mr. Freij told the conference Sunday evening: "I'm not free to move without a military permit. The Israeli government should reconsider this situation." His Israeli counterpart Uzi Baram also predicted a major boost for tourism as the Middle East reopened as a "bridge between continents." Mr. Baram said Jordanian commercial planes would soon overfly Israel and Israeli flights would use Jordanian and Saudi airspace cutting hours of flights to the Far East.

Fateh follows path of peace — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Militants from Yasser Arafat's Fateh movement have not killed any Israelis in the last six months compared with eight over the previous year, according to an Israel peace watchdog. Figures compiled by Peace Watch, which describes itself as a non-partisan group monitoring the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy agreement, showed that the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas has killed 35 Israelis since May when Palestinian autonomy was launched. "Fateh was not involved in even one of the acts of terror which claimed the lives of 41 Israeli citizens and soldiers," in the last six months, Peace Watch said in a statement released Monday. The Islamic Jihad, another fundamentalist group opposed to the peace process, killed three Israelis over the same period. However, Peace Watch added that Fateh activists had continued to be involved in killing Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel as well as street violence.

Iran boosts security around French embassy

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Monday reinforced security around the French embassy in Tehran, AFP has learned. Around 15 armed policemen in cars took up positions in the streets surrounding the embassy compound in a busy district of the Iranian capital. The building is usually guarded by one officer. A French diplomat told AFP that the embassy had not requested additional protection, but that it was "not unusual" the authorities would decide to reinforce security around the mission under the present circumstances. "The move came after French authorities launched a massive security operation in Paris as three Iranians went on trial Wednesday for their alleged role in the 1991 assassination of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiari in the French capital. A French anti-terrorist judge in charge of the case has said the suspects were linked with the Iranian secret service, a charge Tehran has strongly denied. In November 1993, unidentified assailants hurled grenades at the French embassy and Air France office in Tehran, injuring one person in the airline agency.

Iraqis allowed to use private armed guards

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The Iraqi parliament has passed a bill allowing citizens to employ armed guards to protect their property, official newspapers reported here Monday. The new law, drafted by the Interior Ministry and presented to the government, is aimed at curbing an unprecedented rise in crime involving firearms amid widespread poverty caused by crippling U.N. sanctions. President Saddam Hussein said to approve the bill before it is enacted. The newspapers said the new law was also aimed at involving people more in internal security. The private guards will be paid by ordinary citizens, but will be selected by the Interior Ministry, which will also fix their fees. They will be allowed to use their firearms in the course of duty.

Thai police turn to jewelry industry

BANGKOK (AFP) — The Thai police department has made an unprecedented appeal to the nation's jewelry magnates to help locate and return some \$20 million in missing Saudi gems. Late Sunday, national police chief Pochana Boonyachinda met with 250 jewelry trade figures, handing out sketches of the missing pieces and offering an amnesty to anyone who could return the jewels and show they had not stolen them, according to an official in the police unit assigned to find the gems. The police chief echoed a similar call from Thai Premier Chuan Leekpai on radio and television last Friday. The appeal marked a clear switch in tactics by police, who have previously threatened gems-holders with public prosecution and stiff jail terms. Police chief Pochana said last month, during his first week in office, that he would make salvaging the image of the police department his top priority in the case, which began in 1989 when a Thai servant stole the jewelry from a Saudi prince in Riyadh.

Zeroual and FIS resume contacts

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Representatives of the Algerian president recently met the leaders of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), renewing the talks process that appeared to have failed last month, the El Hiwar daily said Monday. The presidential representative met Abdel Madani and Ali Belhadj in the residence where they are held under house arrest, El Hiwar, the journal of the National Liberation Front, the former sole ruling party, said.

A spokesman for the Islamic movement, fighting the government since the military stopped the second round of elections in 1992, told the paper that talks were continuing.

"The FIS has not closed the door to talks that could bring a peaceful end to the current crisis," the spokesman said.

El Hiwar, which is generally well informed on the Islamic movement, did not give the name or title of the presidential representatives nor details of what was discussed in the talks.

The paper also said that Mr. Madani and Mr. Belhadj had gone on hunger strike for two days last week but gave no further details.

On Sunday, an FIS spokesman told AFP he had met the two FIS leaders earlier that day in their residence in Djennane Al Mufiti in the centre of Algiers.

Last week, the FIS leadership said it had had no news on the two for a week after the authorities banned visits and cut telephone links.

The two men were released from prison on Sept. 13 into house arrest and held talks through October with government officials.

A week ago President Liamine Zeroual said the talks had failed and accused the FIS leaders of continuing to sponsor violence.

The government, using state television and part of the press, has launched a media offensive against Islamic fundamentalists allegedly responsible for thousands of deaths in nearly three years of bloody civil conflict.

As part of the new campaign to counter the government's sworn enemies, Algerian state television in the last week has run a series of nightly programmes featuring alleged confessions of former members of fundamentalist armed groups.

Religious leaders have been shown attacking the armed groups and accusing them of "operating against Islam and the people." The government exercises strict control over large sections of the written press and almost total control over television and radio.

Gammoh briefs economic body on Casablanca talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Economic Consultative Council on Monday heard a briefing from Finance Minister Sami Gammoh on the outcome of the Casablanca economic summit and discussed measures for the implementation of the conference's recommendations.

Mr. Gammoh told the council, chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, that Jordan submitted proposed investment projects worth \$18 billion covering such areas as water, energy, tourism and other fields.

He told the council that the private sector presented plans for projects in electronic and food industries and in tourism.

The council reviewed a working paper which outlines the economic benefits of the peace process and the joint efforts by the private and public sectors to achieve them.

Mr. Gammoh told reporters after the meeting the

council discussed a draft income tax law.

The council agreed to create a committee comprising specialists from the Finance Ministry and representatives of the private sector and council members to prepare a mechanism for implementing the law, which the minister said, would seek justice for all sectors.

The new law should ensure collection of taxes based on accurate information rather than assessment of income and that taxes on capital profits should be separate from taxes on income and that measures for the implementation of the income tax law be simplified, he said.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan led the Jordanian delegation to the Oct. 30-Nov. 4 Casablanca conference on economic development of the Middle East and North Africa.

Oman pegs Beilin visit to Mideast multilaterals

MUSCAT (AP) — Israel's deputy foreign minister arrived Monday for bilateral discussions, the first time a senior Israeli official has visited a Gulf country for direct talks. Yossi Beilin's visit, expected to last only one day, was the second visit to Oman by a high-ranking Israeli official.

Mr. Beilin also made the first trip, a visit in April for multilateral talks on water.

Mr. Beilin spent an hour in talks with the Sultanate's minister of state for foreign affairs, Youssef Ben Alawi, who issued a statement afterwards pegging the current visit to wider multilateral issues of the Middle East peace process.

"The meeting took place within the framework of the multilateral negotiations for the Middle East peace process," said the statement.

"The talks also extended to the peace negotiations on all fronts and the outcome of the economic summit conference of Casablanca."

Reports at the conference in Morocco said that Oman and neighbouring Qatar were to exchange representation offices with Israel as part of the developing peace process between Arabs and Israelis.

Omani Trade and Industry Minister Magbool Ben Ali Sultan, returning from Casablanca, denied any such plans were afoot "at present." But he admitted meeting with Israeli officials at Casablanca to discuss "many subjects."

On April, Mr. Beilin led Israel's delegation to multilateral talks on water, which Oman hosted.

Israeli water experts visited Oman last month for follow-up talks on plans to establish a water research centre in the Sultanate.

Oman was the first of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to receive Israel as part of the multilateral process. Qatar and Bahrain have since done the same.

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Kuwaitis say U.S. pursues self-interest in Gulf

KUWAIT (R) — The United States, Kuwait's closest non-Arab ally, on Monday received a slap in the face from two influential Kuwaitis who said Washington sought to advance U.S. and Israeli economic interests at the expense of Gulf Arabs.

Abdullah Al Nafisi, a veteran Arab nationalist and associate professor of political science at Kuwait University, suggested Washington wanted to keep Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in power to scare his Gulf opponents into buying U.S. weapons.

Jassem Al Sager, chairman of parliament's foreign affairs committee, said in published remarks that Arab states should not lift their economic boycott of Israel because the Arab-Israeli peace process was biased in favour of the Jewish state.

"Consider that the United States has hijacked the region through the Iraqi threat. We are just passengers aboard this hijacked plane," Mr. Nafisi said in a lecture reported widely in Monday's newspapers.

"I don't really believe that the United States and the West are interested in introducing any change in Iraq... in spite of the media show."

This is because Iraq is the cause for the U.S. military presence in the region from which the United States is making huge profits.

Washington sent large military forces to the region last month to counter a buildup by Iraq near the Kuwaiti border and spearheaded the 1991 Gulf war ousting of Iraqi troops who had occupied Kuwait for seven months.

Some opposition members of parliament, while welcoming U.S. support as vital to Kuwait's survival, oppose what they see as excessive reliance on the West for military and diplomatic support and profligate spending

on Western arms.

"Nafisi's speech is what a growing number of people are saying," an Arab diplomat said, noting the United States is the main arms supplier to the Gulf, the world's largest arms market.

Mr. Nafisi said Iraq's threat was real enough but Washington wanted only to manage it in perpetuity for its own interests, rather than solve it.

Mr. Nafisi said the U.S. military buildup in the region last month had stirred up more trouble in the region by antagonising Iran, another U.S. regional foe.

Mr. Sager, touching on a popular theme, was quoted by Al Qabas newspaper as saying the Arab-Israeli peace process was lopsided in favour of Israel and therefore Arabs would not benefit from the lifting of the direct economic boycott.

"Israel is the party that is

technologically, economically and industrially superior, which means that it, not the Arabs, will benefit from lifting the boycott."

Washington is pressing Gulf countries to lift completely the four-decade-old Arab boycott of Israel.

The six Gulf Cooperation Council states of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait earlier this year lifted an indirect boycott against companies doing business with Israel but still apply direct boycott.

Mr. Nafisi echoed sager's criticism of U.S. boycott policy. He said: "The U.S. is doing this (campaigning against the boycott) because it realises that these (Gulf) people have become a hostage to threats. This region is like a hijacked plane where the hijacker points a machinegun at the people to impose his will."

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Spanish royal couple due here Nov. 11

AMMAN (Petra) — The Spanish royal couple, King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia, are expected to visit Jordan on November 11, according to official sources. The visit is part of a tour of the Middle East and North Africa.

Khalifeh named envoy to S. Arabia

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian government has named a new ambassador to Saudi Arabia. The new envoy is expected to arrive in Riyadh soon.

League criticises Hebron mosque curbs

CAIRO (AP) — The Arab League has criticized the Israeli government for imposing strict controls on access to the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, West Bank.

Rabin to visit U.S. next week

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is expected to visit the United States next week, according to official sources. The visit is part of a tour of the Middle East and North Africa.

Argentine lawmaker seeks report on blas

Buenos Aires (AP) — A high-ranking Argentine lawmaker has demanded a report on the activities of the Argentine Air Force in the Falkland Islands.

Ex-minister sues minister in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — A former minister of the Kuwaiti government has filed a lawsuit against the current minister, claiming that the current minister's actions were illegal.